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KUMA KUMA KUMA BEAR

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Seven Seas Entertainment

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Chapter 1: Bear Gear, I Choose You!

THE WORLD'S FIRST VRMMO (Virtual Reality Massive Multiplayer Online) fantasy RPG—a game with a diverse array of races, numerous classes, and a variety of skills for broad gameplay—was called World Fantasy Online. Today, a year after it went on sale, the game was finally receiving a long-awaited update.

I was fifteen years old, and it had been three years since I became a hermit. I'd come across WFO about a year ago and immediately forgone going to school in favor of dedicating everything I had to the game. What about sleep, you might ask? I slept eight whole hours a night! I *did* still get tired, y'know. My first priority was sleep, the second was tasty grub, and the third was the game.

And school? Only idiots went to school.

There's a neat little thing called the stock market in this world. You invested money, sat back, and watched it grow. It was easy—just like a game. All you had to do was acquire the right information, and then collect the money that flowed right in.

But when I told my parents about my activities, they were like, "School is where you make friends." Friends? Do friends taste good? Their nagging got so bad that I finally just handed them a hundred million yen I'd made by playing the stock market, and they shut right up. They even—get this—stopped coming home. They're probably off spending that money right now, having the time of their lives. I assumed they'd come asking for more once it was gone, so I switched residences to a luxury condo without telling them. Goodbye, parents; it was nice knowing you.

Sure, I was fifteen, but I had money, I was an adequate cook, and I was perfectly fine living on my own. S'all good as long as I can send my laundry out to the cleaners.

I was playing solo when I started up WFO on the day of the hotly anticipated update, like always. I didn't want to waste a single second, so I logged in the second maintenance ended and the update was done patching.

“Welcome back, Lady Yuna. Would you like to hear about the updates?”

On login, a girl in a maid outfit guided me through the menu. She was a guide NPC I’d selected on my first playthrough. Given the choice between a butler and a maid, I hadn’t hesitated to pick the cuter option.

“No need. Just hurry up and start the game.”

“Understood,” she said. “Then we will commence the update campaign.”

“There was one of those?”

“You have received a gift item based on your total hours of gameplay from the past year.”

“Really!” I was second to none in this game when it came to total hours logged. I wasn’t a recluse for *nothing*, after all.

“Please choose whichever box you’d like.”

A trove of giftboxes appeared before me, stretching as far as the eye could see. There were too many to even count.

“You want me to choose from these?”

“Yes, please choose the one you like.”

I didn’t even know where to start, but there was no point in overthinking it. I chose the box right at the maid’s feet. The rest of the boxes vanished the moment I touched it, so there was clearly no changing my mind.

I opened the box...

“The heck is this?!”

Item Name: Bear Set

Right Hand: Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Left Hand: White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Right Foot: Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Left Foot: White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Clothing: Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)

I'd wanted to start playing right away, but the ridiculous freebies made me balk. Even a friendless hermit like me drew the line at parading around in something this embarrassing. And they were nontransferable, so they were doomed to molder in my inventory. I supposed it wouldn't hurt to take a look at the item descriptions...

Black Bear Glove

Attack glove, increases power based on the user's level.

White Bear Glove

Defense glove, increases defense based on the user's level.

Black Bear Shoe and White Bear Shoe

Increase speed based on the user's level.

Prevent fatigue when walking long distances based on the user's level.

Black and White Bear Clothes

Appears to be a onesie. Reversible.

Front: Black Bear Clothes

Increases physical and magic resistance based on the user's level.

Gives heat and cold resistance.

Reverse: White Bear Clothes

Automatically restores health and mana. Amount and speed based on the user's level.

Gives heat and cold resistance.

What was with these broken items? Someone who was already at the level cap, like me, would be unstoppable in these. I still didn't know if I was brave enough to don this onesie thing—but it *would* be a waste

of great items not to.

Could I put up with the embarrassment just because of how strong it would make me?

“Lady Yuna, is something the matter?”

“It’s fine.” Well, it wasn’t like I needed to equip it right this instant. I could take some time to think it over. “Okay. Start the game.”

“I apologize. There is a questionnaire to finish things off.”

“That’s new.”

“I apologize. It is a questionnaire limited to customers who have logged a high number of hours in-game.”

“Well, if I have to.”

“Thank you very much. Do you enjoy World Fantasy Online more than reality?”

“Of course. Reality shmeality.”

“Do you have anyone important to you in the real world?”

“I don’t have anyone like that.” My parents were gold diggers, and I didn’t have friends because I wasn’t going to school.

“Do you have a best friend in the real world?”

“I don’t. These questions are kind of off-putting...”

“Do you have anything important to you in the real world?” The maid ignored my objections and wouldn’t respond to any of my questions. Instead, she kept repeating her current prompt until she got an answer.

“Money, I guess?”

.....

...

The questions went on and on. I wondered: how many of these was I supposed to sit through?

“Do you believe in God?”

“Like, do I have faith? Of course I don’t. All I believe in is my own abilities.”

“And finally, do you think the bear gear is cute?”

“I do, but I don’t want to equip it.”

“Understood. Thank you for answering our survey.” The room filled with a blinding white glow. “Now, please enjoy your new world.”

Chapter 2: Bear Meets Girl

I OPENED MY EYES.

I wasn't at my in-game home, where I was supposed to spawn on login, but in an unfamiliar forest. More importantly, I was wearing the bear gear—both gloves, both shoes, and the onesie. I hadn't expected it to equip without warning, but now that I had it on, it was pretty comfy. The bear gloves looked like hand puppets—I flapped their mouths open and shut by flexing my fingers, and the effect was cuter than I'd anticipated.

I looked around, seeing no one else. Well, I'd start by changing out of this embarrassing getup before anyone saw me. I couldn't switch my gear unless I was home, so I tried to pull up a transporter item from my inventory.

My inventory wouldn't open. *A bug?* Though it'd be a pain in the butt, I supposed I could just log out and log back in again.

Wait, what?

The logout screen wouldn't appear. *Oh well.* I tried contacting someone on my short friend list, but that screen wouldn't show up, either, so I tried opening my map, hoping to at least scope out my whereabouts.

Huh?

My map screen wasn't responding, either. *What's going on here?*
I activated my status screen. That opened up fine.

Name: Yuna

Age: 15 years old

Level: 1

Skills: Fantasy World Language, Fantasy World Literacy

EQUIPMENT

Right Hand: Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Left Hand: White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Right Foot: Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Left Foot: White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Clothing: Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)

Had something gone wrong with the update? The character I spent a whole year developing was reset to level one! I needed to log a complaint at once.

As I was trying to somehow get through to the admins, I heard the tinkle of an incoming message notification. Assuming it was an apology message from them, I tried to bring up the screen, but it wouldn't open. *How am I supposed to read it, then?*

And just as I thought that, a message screen opened up right in front of my eyes.

Sender: God

Congratulations, Yuna! You were selected based on the results of the questionnaire.

Clap clap clap clap (applause).

The place you're in right now is no longer the game world, but a fantasy world that I control. In other words, you've been transported to another world. Starting now, this is where you'll be living.

Of course, I couldn't just leave you with nothing to your name, so I gave you a bear outfit as a present. There are other presents around, so do your best to find them!

Was this some kind of new event? For the time being, I decided to try to find some other players. Fantasy games like this mostly rehashed the same tropes as light novels, anyway. There was no way something like being transported to another world could happen for *real*. What kind of harebrained idiot had come up with this?

The issue at present was that I didn't know where I was. I was just

level one, so if a monster attacked me, I'd be toast.

I wondered—if I died, would I just respawn at my in-game home?

I needed to leave the woods. But before that, I needed a weapon, and all I had were bear gloves with flappy mouths. I kept an eye out as I walked through the woods, and I found a fallen stick that was just the right length. It was better than being empty-handed, so I decided to pick it up. I felt like a hero equipped with a cypress stick.

Just as I was getting used to my suit and stick, a wolf emerged from the underbrush.

I knew this type of wolf—it was one of the basic mobs from the starting area. I tried to check its level, but its status screen wouldn't show up. It'd be fine if it was weak, but I wasn't convinced I could beat it with a tree branch.

At least it was alone.

I readied the tree branch like a sword. The wolf broke into a run and leapt straight at me. I darted to the side, like I always did in the game, and the tree branch hit the wolf in the side. If I'd been holding my usual sword, I would have cut it right in two.

The wolf whimpered and stopped moving. Who could have guessed—I'd beat it in one hit. Maybe this really *was* the hero's cypress stick? I raised the branch high in the air.

Well, I thought, I guess this isn't the time for jokes. Huh?

I watched the wolf's beaten body for a while, but it didn't turn into an item. Monsters were supposed to disappear and drop items when they died. A wolf would leave meat and a pelt or something, or, if you were lucky, a mana gem, but this one didn't disappear. I tried poking it with the tree branch, but it didn't move. It should definitely have been dead. The message from earlier started to feel more real. Was this really another world?

Anyway, I'd get away from here for now. The smell of the wolf's body might attract other monsters. Of course, I didn't have the skill to butcher a wolf even in the real world. I couldn't do stuff like in the games or the novels.

I resumed exploring, but the woods were seemingly endless. I couldn't open my inventory, so I couldn't pull out food. I supposed that if I really wasn't in the game, it was highly likely there wouldn't be any

food in it, anyway. I felt like if I didn't find other people soon, I'd die from starvation even before a monster could get me.

I'd been walking quite a while, but I didn't feel all that tired. Maybe it was because of these bear shoes? They were embarrassing, but pretty nifty.

"Someone, help..."

I heard someone's voice. I figured it could be dangerous to get involved, but it was my first time hearing another person here. Knowing the risks, I chased after the sound and came out into a narrow clearing. A small girl was collapsed there, surrounded by three wolves. She looked too afraid to stand. I snatched up three baseball-sized rocks that were lying on the ground as I ran, holding them firmly in the black bear's mouth.

In order to get the wolves' attention, I threw a rock as hard as I could—then the next, and the one after that.

"Huh?"

Every rock connected, and all three wolves collapsed, spraying blood. I hadn't thought I would make a direct hit. Maybe this bear gear even had aim assist? I flapped the bear mouth open and closed.

It looked like the wolves were dead, so I approached the girl.

"Are you okay?" I called out to her. Her hair was dark; she looked to be about ten years old. I didn't remember being able to pick that kind of character—she must have been an NPC.

"Th-thank you?" she said.

"Why was that a question?"

"Are you going to eat me?"

"I'm not."

"Are you a bear?"



I remembered what I looked like and pulled off my hood.

“Feel better now?” I said.

“Oh, yes.”

I tried to pull up her status screen, but it wouldn't come up. One of two things was going on: the UI that let me get at her stats was bugged, or she was real, and this was actually another world. When I looked at the wolves' gory corpses, I knew which I'd risk money on.

For now, I decided to talk to the girl.

“Are you alone?”

“Oh, yes. My mom is sick, so I was looking for medicinal herbs.”

“A little girl like you?”

“We have no money, so I was gathering them in the forest because we couldn't buy them in town. Then wolves attacked me.”

“A town, you say? Is it one that's close by?”

There we go, I thought, just got some great intel.

“Did you come from another town, miss?” the girl asked me.

“Yeah. I got a little lost; could you lead me to the town?”

“Yes.”

I moved to go, but she stayed in place.

“Are you going to leave these wolves like this, miss?” she asked.

“I figured. It's not like I can take them home.”

“But it's such a waste. You could sell the meat and pelts. The mana gems don't go for much, but they sell too. If we break them down here, they'll be no great load to take home.”

“I don't know how to butcher an animal, so that's not possible.”

“I'd do it, miss. If you don't mind.”

“You know how to do that?”

She nodded at my words.

“Then have at it. How about we split the profit fifty-fifty? That'd help me too.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yup.”

The girl pulled out a small knife and skillfully butchered the first wolf.

“You’re good,” I told her.

“Uh-huh. I do this for work sometimes.”

She cleanly disassembled the wolves into pelts, meat, and mana gems. We divided the load between the two of us to carry. *Life without an inventory screen sure is tough*, I thought. In the game I could have just touched the drops, and that would be it.

“Is the town close by?”

“Uh-huh, it is. That’s why I came here to pick herbs.”

“Did you find any?”

“Yeah, but then the wolves attacked on my way home.”

“Well, how about we head out, then...”

I meant to call her by her name, but I realized I hadn’t asked for it yet. She seemed to infer that, though.

“I’m Fina,” she said.

“I’m Yuna. So, how about we get going, Fina?”

After we walked for a while, I caught sight of town walls in the distance. They looked tall, even from far off—way bigger than I expected. They’d definitely be safe from monster attacks in there.

On the way down, I peppered Fina with all kinds of questions. This really wasn’t the game world that I knew. Nothing she had to tell me about the area matched the maps I knew from before the update. It could have just been a new continent introduced by the update, but the more I heard from her, the more likely it felt that this wasn’t the game. I could probably find out more once we got to town. If I didn’t run into another player there, then I would accept this was another world.

Apparently, on top of the toll (only a silver piece, thankfully) and background check, you needed a resident card or a guild card to get into town. When I told her I didn’t have either, Fina told me I could get a card from the adventurers’ guild.

I hadn’t been around long enough to pick up any kind of criminal history, so I would probably be okay. There was still a ways to go until

we reached the town, so I checked my status. *Huh, I leveled up?*

Name: Yuna

Age: 15 Years

Level: 3

Skills: Fantasy World Language, Fantasy World Literacy, Bear Extradimensional Storage

EQUIPMENT

Right Hand: Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Left Hand: White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Right Foot: Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Left Foot: White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Clothing: Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)

I'd gotten a new skill, too. I checked the rules text.

Bear Extradimensional Storage

The white bear's mouth opens into infinite space. It can hold (eat) anything.

However, it cannot hold (eat) living things.

Time will stop for objects that are inside of it.

Anything that is put into the extra-dimensional storage can be pulled out at any time.

I'd gotten something like WFO's inventory. If I put food into my game inventory for long periods of time, the food wouldn't go bad in there, either. Maybe I was in the game after all? But why'd that functionality come attached to a bear?

"Hm?"

I'd expected the inventory to be empty, but it had money in it. It also contained a piece of paper. I pulled the paper out of the white

bear's mouth and read it.

I brought you that money you held so dear in the real world.

Of course, you can't use it here, so I've exchanged it for this world's currency.

—God

I was thankful, but...

This tipped the scales from this being a game towards it being a fantasy world again. Still, if this really were another world, then this money would come in handy. I felt around in my glove and found a ridiculous amount there. I wondered—did I have enough to live as a recluse for the rest of my life, even in another world?

I'd think about it after getting to town.

Chapter 3:

The Bear Trades in the Wolves

A GUARDSMAN WAS WAITING for us at the gate. He stared straight at me, and that was when I remembered what I looked like.

Bear. Ursidae. Bruin. Teddy. Whatever word you chose, the meaning was the same. I looked suspicious, but not in a frightening way. Fina had called me “cute.” Actually, I felt so cute it was embarrassing. It probably would have looked cute if a girl around Fina’s age wore it, but not so much for a recluse like me.

Regardless, the guard really didn’t need to ogle me like that.

“You there, girl, you were the one who went out to look for herbs, weren’t you? Did you find any?”

“Yes,” Fina said. She smiled.

“Good. Looks like you kept your promise and didn’t wander deep into the woods. There are monsters in there.”

I smiled wryly at those words.

“And what’s going on with you, strangely-dressed lass?”

“Do me a favor, and don’t mind me.”

“Well, everyone has their own style, I suppose. Anyway, if you’re coming in, show me your identification.”

Fina showed him her resident card.

“I’m not a resident in this town,” I said, flapping the bear’s mouth open and closed, “but I heard that I could get in if I paid.”

“Your identification...” The guard could only get out those two words.

“I don’t have any, but I can get in as long as I pay a silver coin, right?”

“You don’t have anything at all? It can be an identification card from any town.”

“I was living in a place without cards.”

“I see. In that case, we’ll take a silver coin as tax and look into your criminal record.”

I pulled a silver coin from the white bear’s mouth and handed it to the guard.

“Well then. If you could come over here...”

There shouldn’t be any issues, since I hadn’t committed any crimes since coming into this world. I hadn’t committed any crimes in the real world either, obviously.

No, really.

The guard brought me over to a building close by; probably one of the standard-issue barracks that always seemed to show up in fantasy novels. He led me to an area like a reception desk and laid a crystal panel in front of me.

“Please place your hand on this crystal. If you are a criminal, it will turn red.”

“I just need to put my hand here?”

“Yes. It will react to your mana and look you up.”

I put my hand on the crystal panel, but it didn’t react.

“Looks like you’re fine.”

“Can you really tell with something like this?”

“You don’t even know what the panels are? Where are you from?”

“A distant village.”

“Well, I suppose I’ll explain it to you. This crystal panel is connected to all the other crystal panels in the country. When a baby is born in town, it gets issued a resident card and has its mana registered at the same time. They do the same thing in the capital and the other towns. That way, we can tell where someone came from.”

So it’s like a citizen registry.

“When someone has committed a crime,” he went on, “we can log that data in the crystal panel. If the person is registered, the data will be transferred to all the crystal panels. Based on that, a criminal won’t be allowed entrance to the towns or capital anymore.”

“What happens if they use a guild card, or someone else’s card?”

“That’d be impossible. The cards are made to respond to mana. If

the mana doesn't match the one that it's been registered to, the card won't respond."

So mana's kind of like a fingerprint?

"But if the mana isn't registered, there's no point, is there?" I asked.

"That'd be the case. But it's essentially only villagers from way out in the boonies, who've never traveled to the towns or capital, who don't have cards. It's unlikely they would be felons."

I thought that was unlikely too.

"That's it for now. Anything else you'd like to know? If not, you can go into town."

When I thanked him and left the room, Fina was waiting for me. I gave her a pat on the head.

"Yuna, was everything okay?"

"Yeah, it was fine."

"Then let's go sell the wolves at a guild."

Though the town wasn't that far off from a town in the game, I felt like there was something different about it. Also, for some reason, I felt like everyone was looking at me. *Maybe it's because I'm an outsider?*

"Your clothes sure do stand out, Yuna."

Oh, right.

I was wearing a bear onesie.

Fina led me to this big warehouse-looking place. There was a good-sized building next to it and adventurers carrying swords and staffs milling around. Since their status screens wouldn't appear, I couldn't tell whether they were players from the game or NPCs. I wanted to examine them more, but I decided to follow Fina for now.

"They'll buy them here. Excuse me," Fina called out to a guy behind a counter, "we'd like you to buy wolves from us."

"Well, if it isn't Fina. What're you doing here at a time like this?"

"I came to sell stuff." Fina placed the wolf materials she held onto the table. I did the same.

"How'd you come across wolf meat and pelts?"

“They tried to eat me while I was picking herbs, and then she saved me.”

“You went to the woods?!” the man at the counter exclaimed.

“Yeah. I ran out of herbs for Mom.”

“Haven’t I told you over and over again? If you need herbs, I’ll get them for you.”

“But I can’t rely on you forever, Mr. Gentz. Especially since I haven’t paid you for them.”

“Like I said, that doesn’t matter. If something happens to you, what am I supposed to tell your mother?”

“It’ll be fine. Besides, I’ve gone to the woods tons.”

“But didn’t you just get attacked by wolves? And you got saved by that weird—that odd—girl there. Thanks, miss—for saving Fina,” he seemed to struggle with talking to me and looking at me straight-on at the same time.

“No problem,” I said. “I was lost, so she helped me out, too.”

“I’d like to thank you,” said Mr. Gentz, “but this is my job, so I’ve got to give you the normal amount for buying those off you, if that’s fine.”

“That’s alright.”

The man checked the wolf mats.

“Uhh, meat and pelts, huh. This is what I can pay for this much.”

Mr. Gentz put some coins down in front of us. I couldn’t tell if it was a fair price or if he was lowballing us.

“Yes, please.” Fina looked pleased, though. She tried to give me half of the money she had accepted.

“Fina, I don’t need that money, but could you show me the way to a good inn? I don’t know where to go. I guess you’ve gotta take the herbs to your mom quick, though, don’t you?”

“It’s okay,” she said. “There’s an inn on the way to my house, so I’ll take you there.”

“Thank you.”

“Fina!” said Mr. Gentz. “You better not put yourself in danger again. You tell me when you need any herbs.”

“Okay, I will,” Fina answered, then turned and left.

“Do you know that man?” I asked.

“Yes, he’s always taking care of me. Sometimes he has me help with the butchering when there are a lot of monsters brought in.”

Ah-hah, I thought, so that was why she was so good at butchering corpses.

“And he knows my mom is sick, so sometimes he gives me herbs and medicine for cheap—or for free, once in a while. Still, I can’t go around asking him for medicine every single day.”

So that was why she went out alone into the woods to pick herbs this time. I wanted to do something to help her, but it would probably have to wait, especially considering my current situation.

The inn was about a thirty-minute walk from the trade-in shop, and of course, I was showered with stares the whole time we were walking.

“This is it,” said Fina. “Everyone says their food is good, too.”

“Thank you. Well, you hurry up and get those herbs to your mom.”

“Yeah. Thanks, Yuna.”

Fina ran off. An amazing aroma drifted past me as I stood outside the inn, watching her leave. The sun started to sink; it was time for dinner. For decorum’s sake, I tried to batten down my glee at the prospect of a tasty meal as I headed in. A girl in her late teens waiting tables stopped mid-stride and gave me a perplexed look. I didn’t know what to do with everyone giving me the same exact reaction every single time.

“W-welcome?” the girl said as she stared.

“I heard I could stay here?”

“Yes, you can. It’s one silver coin every day, morning and evening meals included. It’s half a coin without the meals.”

“In that case, I’d like a ten day stay, with meals.”

“The bath is open from six in the evening until ten at night.”

“You have a bath?!”

“Yes, indeed. Rest assured that the men’s and women’s areas are

also properly separated.”

That was a happy accident. I never expected an inn with a bath.

“Can I get a meal right away?”

“Certainly.”

After I was done listening to her explanation, I pulled ten silver coins out of the white bear’s mouth. When she took the money, the girl squeezed the black bear.

“Whoa! I’m sorry. It was so cute. So that was ten days with meals, right? I’ll get the meal prepared right away, so please take a seat and wait. Oh, I’m the innkeeper’s daughter, Elena. Nice to meet you.”

“I’m Yuna. I’m looking forward to my stay.”

Chapter 4: The Bear Agonizes after Seeing Herself in the Mirror

AFTER I POLISHED off my meal, I was led up to room on the second floor. Fina was a lifesaver—I'd need to make sure I thanked her properly.

"The bath is open, so you can go in," said Elena, "but please don't take long, because there will be others waiting."

"Got it."

"Breakfast is from six to eight. Please be warned—we can't serve you if you're late."

After explaining more or less everything, Elena went back downstairs, leaving me alone with the room. It was just a one-person room, so it wasn't all that big—just a bed and a small desk. But my things were all in my inventory, so it was more than big enough for just me. While I was looking around the room, I noticed that there was a mirror on the wall. I checked myself out again.

It was embarrassing. There was no doubt about it—I was dressed in the kind of loungewear girls would sometimes wear at home. I was so embarrassed that I'd been walking around outside looking like this that I thought about not doing it tomorrow.

I worked up my courage and looked at myself in the mirror again. There was something uncanny about my reflection.

"That's my actual face..."

In WFO, player avatars all had the same outlines for their faces, but you could change their hair colors and hairstyles. My avatar had silver pigtails, but right now, I had long, straight black hair that reached my hips. A hermit like me wasn't exactly going to bother going to the salon, so my hair had just gotten longer and longer. Fixing it up was too much of a bother, so I'd just left it down.

The mirror reflected my real face, my real hair color, and my real hairstyle. I remembered my avatar was ten centimeters taller than me, but when I checked again, I was definitely the same height that I was in

real life.

But I'm not short. I'm just a tiny bit shorter than average, really.

Really.

Much as I didn't want to admit it, I knew this really couldn't be the game world if I was physically myself here. The confirmation that it was real made me begin to panic—until I realized there was nothing to panic about.



I didn't have great parents or friends; nobody I would miss. The only thing I'd left in the real world was the money I'd earned from stocks, and according to the letter from this place's god, they'd converted that money into this world's currency. The only things I'd regret losing from my previous world were entertainment and food, but there were probably fun things in this world, and the food at the inn was great. If I wanted to become a recluse again, I could. Unfortunately, this world didn't have the internet or TV, so it'd be boring.

Then again, if I thought of the world itself as a game, it might be worthwhile to travel around and have fun.

When I thought of it that way, I was starting to warm up to the idea.

"Okay," I told myself, "I'll prepare for tomorrow by taking a bath and turning in for the night."

When I went to the bath, I stripped off the bear gloves and onesie in the changing room. All I had on without them were my underwear and bra, which meant...

That was all I was wearing while I'd been walking around town. *At least give me a shirt!* I thought. Come to think of it, I didn't have underwear to change into, so I needed to buy some. I pulled off my current pair...and something caught my eye.

I slowly unfurled my underwear.

"What the heck..."

My underwear had bears on them—one white and one black. Was the god that brought me to this world just really into bears?

"I'd rather not think too much about it."

The bath left me feeling rejuvenated. Long soaks were forbidden, so I got out earlier than I was used to. I didn't have a change of clothes, so I tried putting on the bear underwear and clothes again from earlier.

"Guess I've got some shopping to do tomorrow."

I suddenly remembered something. The item description for the onesie had said that if I reversed it to the white side, my stamina would be recovered. In the spirit of discovery, I did just that, and pulled it on. The effect was remarkable. I could feel myself being healed. My body filled with warmth from the inside out.

I got back to my room and slid under the covers to rest from that day's fatigue. *Nice and cozy*, I thought.

"Good night," I said, even though no one would hear it.

I woke up early, possibly because I'd gone to bed early. Perhaps because of the white bear's effects, I didn't feel one bit tired. The prospect of keeping the bear gear on was growing more and more attractive. Maybe it was cursed.

If only it at least looked like a *cool* bear.

Apparently, I had some time to kill before breakfast. I pulled up my status screen.

Name: Yuna

Age: 15 years old

Level: 3

Skills: Fantasy World Language, Fantasy World Literacy, Bear Extradimensional Storage

GEAR

Right Hand: Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Left Hand: White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Right Foot: Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Left Foot: White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Clothing: Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)

Underwear: Bear Underwear (Nontransferable)

I'd gotten even more weird equipment.

Bear Underwear

Won't get dirty no matter how much they're used.

An excellent item that won't retain sweat or odors.

Will grow with the user.

Ideal equipment for a recluse! I was particularly grateful that the underwear would grow with me. I didn't have much of a chest, but I'd sure need it for when I got a great rack in the future. I wouldn't have the hassle of resizing my underwear all the time.

When I went downstairs for breakfast, Elena was wiping down the tables with a dust cloth.

"Good morning."

"Morning! Can I eat?"

"Yes, you may." Elena stared at me.

"What is it?"

"You're white today. It looks great on you," she told me with a beautiful smile.

I wasn't *not* embarrassed just because I wasn't a black bear anymore, but changing would be a pain, so I just ate breakfast in the white bear clothes. The bread and soup were delish.

When I got back to my room, I changed back into my black bear clothes and set about making a list of things to do that day:

1. Buy a change of clothes (underwear included).
2. Get some identification (go to the adventurers' guild).
3. Get some gear (I want a sword).
4. Gather intel (maybe at a library or bookshop).
5. Figure out how strong I am (those wolves were easy peasy).

I asked Elena where the adventurers' guild was, and discovered it was the next building down from where Fina and I went to sell the wolves. I'd be in for a lot of inconvenience without identification, so I decided to go there first.

To my surprise, I ran into none other than Fina on the way out.

"Yuna, good morning."

"Fina, what do you need?"

"I wanted to say thank you again, and I was wondering how the inn was."

“It was great. The food’s delicious, and I’m thrilled they have a bath. Anyway, I’m staying for the next ten days.”

“I’m glad that you like it.”

“Did you do okay, Fina?”

“Yes! I had my mom take the herbs. So, where are you going, Yuna?”

“I’m going to the guild, and then I was thinking of taking a look around the town,” I said.

“Can I go to the guild with you?”

“I don’t mind, but I’m just going to get some ID made.”

“I’m also going over to the guild in order to check for butchering work.”

“Butchering work?”

“I told you that I do butchering work yesterday, right? The one who gives me that work is Mr. Gentz.”

“Mr. Gentz?”

“Yeah, the man who bought the wolf parts from us yesterday. Sometimes the adventurers bring back a lot of monsters without butchering them. When that happens, I help out. That’s why I always go check in first thing in the morning every day.”

“Oh, you did say something like that yesterday.”

This little girl has a job butchering monster corpses? I guess that makes sense in a fantasy world. I bet no one even bats an eye...

“Mr. Gentz always looks out for me.”

Maybe he’s a pedo...

“I think Mr. Gentz likes my mom.”

Or maybe I just have a dirty mind. Assuming the worst of people from the available evidence was a bad habit of mine.

Fina talked about Mr. Gentz and her mom as we made our way back toward the building where we sold the wolves. Needless to say, I was showered in stares the whole way over!

Chapter 5:

The Bear Visits the Adventurers' Guild

THE GUILD WAS PACKED with adventurers, each equipped with their own swords and staffs. I felt like I was back in one of the old quest hubs. Then again, not a single one of them was a player.

"There's a lot of people around for this time of day."

"That's because it's a scramble for the lower-level adventurers to get work. Everyone comes here early to get the best jobs."

I separated from Fina, since she was heading over to Mr. Gentz, and headed into the guild. It looked like most of the people there were gross old men. Their stares fixed on me, possibly because they were sizing me up, or because it was rare for girls to come into the guild. When I examined the crowd, there *were* female adventurers, but only a few.

I ignored the stares and made my way to the receptionist, who looked like she was in her twenties.

"So I'm new here," I said.

"Oh, yes. So you'd like to become a member of the guild?"

"I heard that it would come with identification, right?"

"Yes, you'll be able to use the guild member card in any country."

"In that case, could you help me with it?"

When I told her that, I felt eyes on me and flipped around.

"Hey, is that gal in the weird clothes supposed to be an adventurer?" said one of the creeps behind me in line. "Looks like she's really underestimating us. Little ladies like you drive down our market value."

Was this guy a walking cliché?

"I just came here because I wanted an ID."

"All the more reason to say something. We don't need any adventurers who don't work."

"I never said I wasn't going to work. I'll do the things I can."

“And I said that’ll lower our value.”

“Ma’am,” I said to the receptionist, “this man talks a lot, but is what he’s saying true?”

“As long as you fulfill the minimum requirements for the guild, there isn’t a problem.”

“There are requirements?”

“You must be over thirteen years old and rise to E-rank within a year. If you aren’t able to, your membership will be revoked.”

“What’s E-rank?”

“E-rank requires proof you can slay low-ranking monsters like goblins and wolves.”

“In that case, we’re good. I can beat a wolf.”

“Gah ha ha. Don’t make stuff up,” chortled the creep behind me. “There’s no way a little girl like you could beat a wolf.”

“What’s this guy’s rank?” I asked the front desk lady.

“He is Mr. Deboranay of D-rank.”

“And the ones laughing at me?”

“They are all D-ranks and E-ranks.”

The adventurers smirked. Players like these had existed in the game, too—idiots who leapt to conclusions about you based on how you looked. In games, as in life, there was only one way to deal with idiots: proving them wrong to their faces. That said, I’d take any fight anyone picked on principle.

“Hmph,” I said. “This adventurers’ guild must be pretty lame if all these people are just D-rank.”

“What did you say?” said Deboranay.

“Didn’t you say it yourself? Are you an idiot? Do your ears not work? If someone like me can’t become an adventurer, then that makes you all garbage, since none of you can beat me.”

“Why, you...you got a death wish?”

“Is there a place around here where we can have a match?”

When I was playing games solo, idiots like him picked fights with me all the time, and I always turned the tables on them with characters

I'd funneled time and money into. If I didn't nip jerks like these in the bud, they'd multiply like roaches and give me grief down the line.

"Yes," said the receptionist, "there is a place behind here, but..."

"In that case, if you guys win, I'll give up becoming an adventurer and I'll leave. If you guys lose, you'll stop being adventurers and leave. That good with you?"

"You underestimating us even though you're a girl? If we lose against you, we'll quit! Right, boys?!"

"Yeah!" Deboranay's flunkies cheered, looking smug to the last.

"Miss from the front desk, you heard all of that just now, right?"

"Yes. However, I would suggest apologizing. Mr. Deboranay has his quirks, but he really is in D-rank."

But she'd confirmed she'd heard it all. I wouldn't let them pretend they forgot what they said.

The receptionist led us to a training pit in the back. A crowd of fifteen or so adventurers followed behind me, with Deboranay at their head.

"Umm, are you really doing this?" said the receptionist.

"Yeah," I said. "Letting weaklings be adventurers affects the whole guild's reputation, so I need to get them to quit early."

"Why you little—!" said Deboranay. "Don't act like you're leaving here alive."

"In other words," I replied, "you're prepared to die, too? They say the weak are all bark and no bite. Looks like they got that right."

"Hey," said Deboranay as he readied his sword. "Let's hurry up and get this started."

"Uh..."

I had forgotten I had no weapon. All I had was the cypress stick.

"Something wrong? Hurry up and get your weapon out."

While I was looking around trying to figure out what to do, I saw Fina heading over. That girl had great timing. It looked like she ran over after noticing the commotion. How adorable.

"Yuna!"

“Fina, could you lend me your knife?” I asked her as I approached. “I’ll make sure to give it back later.”

“Are you fighting, Yuna?”

“Things just shook out that way. It’ll be fine; just watch.”

I borrowed the knife from Fina and squared up with Deboranay.

“*That’s* the weapon you’re fighting with?” he said.

“I wouldn’t sully my own weapon against a goblin-tier enemy.”

“I’ll kill you.”

“I’ll say this as many times as I have to,” said the woman from the front desk, “but you can’t kill each other. You may begin.”

Deboranay charged, hoisting his longsword. I leapt a whole three meters to the side with one step. Because of my bear shoes’ ability, I was more than quick enough. Immediately after, I closed in on Deboranay with one step and punched him just under the ribs using my black bear hand.

My secret technique: Bear Punch.

Huh? It didn’t end him. All it did was make him scowl. *Maybe it’s because of the difference between our levels?*

“Why, you...”

Deboranay, who had taken the bear punch without flinching, readied his sword. *Excuse me*, I thought, *what’s this amateur doing using his sword when we’re close enough for hand-to-hand combat?*

WFO had hand-to-hand battle events. They were open to all, without level, weapon, magic, or gear restrictions, and occasionally featured battles where the admins would change the settings to make the fighters have fixed defensive and offensive abilities.

In a fight where levels, weapons, and equipment didn’t matter, the match would be decided based on skill. From my time in those circuits, I knew that enemies who would rely on raw power to attack were no match. I bear punched Deboranay’s exposed wrist, and because he had been leaning into a sword thrust, he lost his balance. The next moment, Deboranay had a knife thrust to his neck.

“Looks like this is over,” I told him.

“Don’t screw with me!”

He brushed aside my knife and tried to raise his sword, and I backstepped around it. These bear shoes were just way too useful.

“Ms. Front Desk, I won the match just now, didn’t I?”

“You’ve got to be kidding me. The battle isn’t over yet.”

I looked at the receptionist, but she had no idea what to do. She seemed beside herself. I wanted her to make a decisive call, though.

“Okay, fine,” I said. “I won’t just end the match; I’ll end your life. Don’t think that I’ll let my knife stop this time.”

When I said that, the man’s face twitched. He probably knew the difference between our physical strengths. I had evaded his attacks and was also faster than him, and if I had used the knife instead of my bear punch earlier, I would have stabbed him in the hip. On top of that, he definitely couldn’t deny that I’d pressed the knife against his neck at the end. That basically meant I had already stabbed him twice.

“Are you really that scared of this little knife?”

I let him get a glimpse of it.

“Sorry. Using this against a person without no qualifications to be an adventurer was just so immature of me.”

I hurled the knife at Deboranay’s feet, embedding it in the ground.

“Not scary anymore, right?”

I made a little *come and get it* gesture with my gloves.

“Don’t take me for a fool.”

He charged hard, like an idiot. I sidestepped him, but his sword followed me. Of course he’d figure it out after I’d used the same method twice to evade him.

If one step didn’t work, then I just needed to take two steps, and if that didn’t work, I just had to leap three times. I evaded with three steps, got into his blind spot with the fourth, and in the fifth, I popped up right in his business. My bear punch collided with his face, and Deboranay’s giant body went down.

I hit his face with my right hand, then left, right, left, right, left. Bear punch, bear punch, bear punch, bear punch, bear punch, bear punch, bear punch. It looked like the black bear hand really was stronger—only his left cheek, which was turned towards me, was super swollen.

He didn't move. Once I saw that, I disengaged. The whites of his eyes were showing; he was passed out.

"So, who's next?" I asked my audience. None of them stepped up. "Looks like no one. In that case, Ms. Front Desk, could you remove all the adventurers here from the guild? It looks like they're weaklings."

I grinned.

"But..." one of them murmured.

"But all of you said it yourself," I said, "didn't you? Weaklings like me can't become adventurers. Which means anyone *weaker* than me *definitely* can't become an adventurer, right? Which includes this guy I've just beaten and people who won't even try me in a fight."

I looked around, still grinning. It looked like there weren't any adventurers who felt like they could win after seeing that fight. Deboranay must have been the strongest of them all.

"I didn't say that!" One of the adventurers broke the silence.

"I didn't say that, either," another continued.

"Deboranay was the one who said that, wasn't he?"

"That's right."

It seemed they were going to sell out Deboranay to save their own butts.

"But I said that, didn't I? If you guys won, then I'd give up on being an adventurer and leave. If you guys lost, you would give up being an adventurer and leave, and then, when that guy said, 'If I lose against you, I'll quit! Right, boys,' you all said 'Yeah.' I got the lady from the front desk to confirm that, didn't I?"

I looked at the receptionist.

"Yes..." she answered in a quiet voice.

The adventurers begin to stalk into the training area. They had nowhere to hide anymore, and nothing to lose.

"You better wait to say that until after you beat all of us," said one.

"Or how about you face all of us together?" said another.

One, two, then three people arrayed themselves around me. Looked like I needed to beat all of them at once.

I guess if they're only as strong as Deboranay, this won't be so bad, I thought.

The battle ended too soon, if you ask me. I couldn't be sure without checking my status, but I'd probably leveled up from beating Deboranay. My bear step was even faster, and my bear punch's power was several levels higher. I beat the poor fools with a single blow.

"Hey, what do you think you guys are doing?!" A rugged, musclebound man came charging into the training area. "Hey, Helen, explain what happened!"

Helen, the receptionist, tried to explain as best she could. Once she was done, the musclebound man looked at me.

"You," he said, "girl in that weird get-up!"

"What?"

"Were you the one who did this?"

"It wasn't my fault. They threatened me with violence, so I was just defending myself. You're not going to make me shoulder the blame, are you?"

"The guild is fundamentally neutral when it comes to fights between adventurers."

"In that case, you're on my side."

"And what makes you think that?"

"I haven't joined yet, so I'm not an adventurer. I'm just a regular person. Since I was attacked by adventurers as a normal citizen, aren't they the responsibility of the guild that's in charge of them? You're not saying you're siding with multiple adventurers who ganged up on one normal girl citizen, are you?"

"Well..."

"In that case, you're on my side as an average citizen."

Granted, I wasn't a resident of this town, but he didn't have to know that. The man scratched his head and hesitated. "So what do you want?"

"I guess just to register with the guild and for them to be deregistered."

“I’ll approve your registration, but I can’t kick them out.”

“They’re bowing their heads and pleading for you to let them quit because they’re weak. And you won’t let them? Is the adventurers’ guild really that tyrannical?”

“What? You guys wanted to quit being adventurers?!” the swoldude asked the handful of still-conscious adventurers on the ground. The men assumed ambiguous expressions and declined to answer.

“That’s what they said. Someone as weak as me can’t become an adventurer, according to them. They said if they got beat by a weakling like me, they’d quit being adventurers.”

“Did you guys really say that?”

Several of them nodded.

“Well, I’ve learned that these guys are idiots,” he said, “that’s for sure.”

“Right. Good. In that case, can you do the needful?”

“I’m going to ask again: Do you guys really want to quit? If you’re not going to answer, then just leave your guild cards behind and get out of here.”

“SORRY!” the injured adventurers shouted, hanging their heads low.

“Could you forgive them?”

“On one condition.”

“Why not? Just tell me.”

“I want a guarantee that the guild won’t stay neutral if the other adventurers ever try anything with me again.”

“I got it. If they give you any trouble, the guild will take responsibility.”

“Well then, I have nothing more to say.”

Chapter 6: The Bear Makes a Guild Card. Class: Bear

WE CAME BACK from the training area and I had them make me a guild card. Helen, who had finished arranging for the adventurers to be treated, came back to the reception desk. I could see the exhaustion on her face. It definitely wasn't my fault, I was sure.

"Please fill out your name, birthday, and class."

"My birthday?"

"Yes, we need it to check your age."

"Can't I just tell you how old I am?"

"If you do that, your guild card won't update, even when your birthday comes."

Right, if I just told them my age, then I'd just end up being eighteen or whatever forever. But what would I do about my birthdate? This world had to have a different calendar from Earth, but I did have the skill Fantasy World Literacy, so maybe it'd translate. For the time being, I filled in my name in Japanese and the date I was born in Japan according to the western calendar.

"So you're fifteen, Ms. Yuna?" said Helen.

It had worked! You had to hand it to the fantasy genre. I needed to fill in the class column next.

"My class?"

"It'll be referenced for companion recruitment and limited quests."

"Companion?"

I didn't just react to the word "companion" because I'm a loner, mind you. I totally had friends. Just not... a lot.

When I was playing the game, I was a magic swordswoman. It was the optimal choice for the sort of solo play I preferred; it gave me good

options for handling enemies that couldn't be killed by either physical damage or magic alone. It wasn't really popular for playing in a party; swordsmen did better melee damage, and when you needed magic, you'd just recruit a sorcerer. That was why I never ended up joining a party.

It wasn't like no one ever invited me or anything.

"I don't need one, so can I leave it blank?"

"It'll help if you could write something."

"Umm."

It wasn't like I was a magic swordswoman right now, but I had to write something. What was my current class? I couldn't use magic. I had no sword. Was I a fighter?

I tried my best to ignore the voice that seemed to issue from the heavens to tell me, "Your class is Bear, isn't it?"

Name: Yuna

*Birthdate: Month ** Day ** Year 20***

Class: Bear

I ended up writing it down. Helen looked at it with disgust, but I guess she wanted to get this over with, since she didn't say anything.

"Well then, please put your hand on this crystal panel."

It was identical to the one at the gate. These things supposedly checked your mana, which made me revisit a question that had been bugging me—was magic something unique to each person, like fingerprints? While I was puzzling that over, Helen operated the crystal panel.

"It'll take some time for your registration to go through, so I'll explain how the guild works in the meantime. Your guild card has your name, age, and class on it, plus your adventurer rank and the number of quests you've accepted. This includes information about each quest, how many times you've succeeded, and how many times you've failed. Your currently accepted quests will be recorded. This information can be accessed from any guild."

Right, so that meant that the number of times I failed would be recorded, too. No one would want to hire an adventurer who'd failed a lot, after all.

"You don't have records for how many monsters I've slain or something?"

"No, we don't. There's no point."

"Huh?"

"Even if you brought in a mana gem as a trophy, we couldn't tell whether you beat it yourself or had help from a hundred people."

So things didn't get automatically recorded like if you beat a monster in a game. That was fair enough—if ten thousand people teamed up to battle a dragon and only the person who dealt the finishing blow got credit for the kill, things would get ugly real quick. On the flip side, giving ten thousand people the title of dragon slayer didn't make much sense, either.

"Next I'll explain the guild ranking. The ranks start with F, and you rise to E, D, C, B, A, and S. You increase in rank based on your successes and failures while fulfilling quests. If you have a lot of failures, you won't advance, so please accept quests that are within your skill level. Also, if you continue to accept quests of the same rank as yourself, you won't increase in rank."

"Why's that?"

"You can accept quests up to a rank above yours. Because of that, no matter how many hundreds of F-rank quests you accept, as someone in F-rank, you won't rise up."

"In other words, if I complete a quest a rank above mine, then I'll go up a rank?"

"The standard criteria is to complete more than ten quests a rank above yours. Then, the guild makes the final call."

"What happens if I accomplish a quest by teaming up with people a rank higher than mine?"

"That's a very specific situation to explain, but when you take on a quest, everyone must present their guild card. If someone with a high rank is in the group, your inspection rank goes up."

"Which means?"

“The number of quests you need to complete increases. For example, if someone from D-rank were to complete quests with the aid of an adventurer of C-rank, then they would need to complete over twenty quests to rise to C-rank. If they get the help of an S-rank, they won’t rise in rank no matter how many times they complete quests.”

“What happens if they secretly do that?”

“The guild can’t do anything about that. But it’s true that there are aristocrats who use the method you spoke of to rise in rank.”

In other words, they would hire a high-ranking adventurer to help them to rise in rank. I figured hiring someone with a high rank would take more money than a normal adventurer could spare.

“And lastly, only you can use this card. If you lose it, reissuing the card will require a ten-silver coin handling fee.”

She handed me the finished silver card, and I looked it over.

Name: Yuna

Age: 15 years old

Class: Bear

Adventurer Rank: F

That was all the information on it. *This receptionist lady actually wrote “Bear” in for my class.* I noticed Helen was grinning.

“The quests are put up on that board. If you see a quest there that you’d like to accept, please bring the written quest to the front desk.”

The board she pointed out was surrounded by a small crowd, but there were other boards that went completely ignored.

“What about that one?”

“That board has high-ranking quests.”

“I see.”

Fina was standing outside when I left, looking concerned.

“What’s wrong, Fina?”

“I was worried about you.”

“Oh, sorry for making you worry. I got registered, so everything’s

fine. Did you find any work?”

“There wasn’t any. Most of the adventurers brought their things in already butchered. They get more money that way. There aren’t a lot of monsters that get brought in intact.”

“Really?” I didn’t want to get my hands dirty butchering monsters, and I didn’t care whether they were cheaper, so I was planning to bring them in unharvested. It wasn’t like a modern-day hermit like me could butcher an animal or a monster in the first place, anyway.

I gave Fina a pat on the head and was just thinking about parting ways with her to search the town when I stopped. “Oh, right. Fina, you don’t have anything to do, right?”

“I don’t. There isn’t any work anywhere else today, either.”

“How about you show me around the town today? I don’t know how much you make in a day normally, but how does a silver coin and lunch sound for compensation?”

“You already paid me too much yesterday, so that’s too generous. A ten-year-old can’t make a silver coin in just a day.”

“Then today is special. And once I figure out the town, this job will be gone.”

I gave her a second, gentle pat on the head. I never had a younger sister, but I wondered whether it would have been like this.

“Thanks, Yuna.”

“Let’s go. Could you start by showing me the best place I can go to buy a weapon?”

Chapter 7: The Bear Goes to the Weapons Shop

BEFORE FINA led me along, I checked my status. My bear punch was stronger, and I definitely felt like I'd grown a level.

Name: Yuna

Age: 15 years old

Level: 8

Skills: Fantasy World Language, Fantasy World Literacy, Bear Extradimensional Storage, Bear Identification

GEAR

Right Hand: Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Left Hand: White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Right Foot: Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Left Foot: White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Clothing: Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)

Underwear: Bear Underwear (Nontransferable)

I really had leveled up, and I'd gotten another weird new skill.

Bear Identification

By looking through the bear eyes on the Bear Clothes' hood, one can see the effects of a weapon or tool.

Doesn't work without wearing the hood.

That's a suuuuuuper useful skill, I thought, but why'd my bear gear get skills when I was the one who leveled up?!

If I was going to live in this world, I might have to do it dressed as a bear for my whole life.

Fina led us towards the weapons shop. "What kind of weapon are you going to buy, Yuna?"

"Umm, I haven't decided yet, but I think I want a sword and knife at least."

"Actually, do you not have a weapon, Yuna?"

"I do." A cypress stick totally counted.

"Right. There's no way anyone would walk around the woods without a weapon. In that case, why are you going to the weapons shop?"

"W-well, that's because I might find a real gem there, right? There might be a weapon that really strikes my fancy. So, what kind of weapons shop are we headed to?"

My "secret technique!" When I'm in hot water, I deflect the conversation!

"It's a shop that Mr. Gold runs."

"Mr. Gold?"

"He's in charge of the weapons that the guild has. I got my knife from Mr. Gold, too."

"He gave it to you? He must be nice."

"He told me, 'This one's meant for the scrap pile, so I'll let you have it,' when he gave it to me."

Is he a secret softie? I thought.

"And when he comes to check on the weapons the guild is keeping, he sharpens my knife because he 'might as well.'"

Definitely a softie.

"This is it." Fina stopped in front of a building with a painted sign of a sword hung by the door. Did they not sell any armor, then?

I heard clanging coming from inside as we approached and wondered if they were forging stuff right now. Fina entered first, and a short girl greeted her. 'Weapons shops' in a fantasy games tend to come part and parcel with dwarven shopkeepers, so I wondered if she was one. Or was she just a normal kid?

“Oh welcome, Fina! Did you come to get your knife sharpened?”

“No, I brought Yuna here today. Apparently, she wants a weapon, so I came here to introduce her to Mr. Gold.”

“Oh, so you’ve brought a customer. Thank you.”

“Yuna, this is Mr. Gold’s wife, Mrs. Nelt.”

Okay, dwarf confirmed! I thought, a little relieved. Otherwise he would have been a pedo.

“Did you just look at me funny?”

“No, actually, I was wondering whether you were a dwarf.”

“That I am indeed. Have you never seen a dwarf before, by any chance?”

“No, this is my first time.”

“Well, I suppose you can’t help it, then. You’ve got quite a peculiar look, miss.”

“My name is Yuna. Nice to meet you.”

“So, what kind of weapon do you want?”

“I haven’t decided, so could you show me what you have?”

“So, you’re a beginner! Of course I can. My husband has some work he needs to attend to, so he can’t speak with you at present, but you may look around at your leisure.”

I could hear Mr. Gold clanging away at something in the back. I supposed I didn’t need to meet him, since I was just going to buy a sword. Fina looked disappointed, though. She probably wanted to see him.

Since I’d gotten permission to browse, I inspected the weapons in the shop. I tried picking up a nearby sword. It...wasn’t heavy? I wondered if it was because of the bear gloves. To test it out, I took off a glove and tried lifting it again.

Okay! I thought. *Definitely can’t hold this thing!* I could pick it up, but that was all I could manage. I couldn’t even try swinging it, or anything.

I put the bear glove back on and held the sword. It was light...

I wasn’t going to be able to make it in this world without the bear gear, was I?

I tried out Bear Identification next.

Iron Sword

Skills: None

I tried checking the other swords in the same way.

Iron Sword

Skills: None

Iron Sword

Skills: None

Iron Sword

Skills: None

They were all the same, only varying in shape and length. Swords without magical abilities were probably just the norm. They weren't selling anything subpar, but I didn't see any hidden gems. If this were a game or light novel, they would've had a legendary sword stashed in the corner all rusted and unrecognized, or something.

After all the fuss I'd made to get it, my identification skill was useless. I decided to cut my losses and picked a sword that looked like it would be easy to carry one-handed.

Iron Sword

Skills: None

"I'd like to also look at the knives."

"For skinning and butchering?"

"Sure, one of those, but I'd like throwing ones too." I wanted to have something better than rocks to throw if the situation ever called

for it. Nelt showed me a small knife.

“Do you have a hundred of them?”

“You want that many?”

“Yes, and if you don’t, I’d like all the ones you’ve got.”

“We have a hundred, but please give me a moment. They’re in the back, so I’ll bring them over. But are you really going to use a hundred of them?”

“They’re useful for defeating monsters.”

“I know throwing knives are cheap, but aren’t you going a little overboard?”

“They’re cheap?”

“They’re basically disposable. We make them with leftover iron scraps. Imagine it: you’re battling monsters in the woods. You might be able to hit your prey with a throwing knife, but it’s just as likely it’ll bounce off, or miss, or fall out after it wounds them. You don’t want to be spending real money on something you might not be able to retrieve, right? That was why I asked you whether it was for butchering earlier. Of course, we have knives for battle as well.”

As a newbie adventurer, I was grateful to have her explain the little details of the industry. “I’d also like a butchering knife,” I told her.

“Alright.” She brought out a knife that seemed sharper than the throwing knives. I might not have needed it, but it wasn’t like it’d cause trouble if I had it, so I’d buy it. I pulled out the money my white bear glove and Mrs. Nelt brought the knives from the back room in multiple trips.

“So, when will you come to get them?”

“I’ll take them home right now.”

I started putting away the hundred knives in the bear’s mouth. To finish it off, I put away the sword and butchering knife.

“Is that bear doll a bottomless bag?” She was looking at the bear in surprise.

“A bottomless bag?” I cocked my head at the unfamiliar term.

“A bottomless bag’s a bottomless bag,” she said. “They each have their own restrictions, but they’re useful bags that you can put items in

to carry. They're useful for merchants and blacksmiths like us, who have to handle heavy luggage."

"Are bottomless bags rare?"

"You don't even know that?"

"I got this from somebody I know. That's why I don't really know much about it."

"There are some generous people out there. If you ask me, they're not incredibly unusual. A bottomless bag's value is dependent on how much stuff it can hold. You've got a range of types, but the more it can hold, the higher its value is. I was surprised because it was my first time seeing a bottomless bag that's a bear like yours."

I wondered whether this bear had an item limit. I supposed that if it ever ran out of space, I could just buy another bottomless bag.

"But Yuna, if you had something useful like that, couldn't you have used it when we were carrying back the wolves?" Fina asked,

"I was lost, so I got confused and forgot." I tried to come up with the best lie I could. I actually *had* been confused, since I'd only just changed worlds back then.

Since I'd finished buying the sword, throwing knives, and harvesting knife, I left the weapons shop. Next, I needed new underwear.

Chapter 8: The Bear Goes Shopping

“**W**HAT KIND OF CLOTHES do you want?”

“For now, things that I can wear under these clothes.”

I tugged on my bear onesie. I was wearing underwear underneath. I wanted a shirt, at least.

“So...there’s an expensive store and a cheap one.”

“Either one is fine, but how are they different?”

“The expensive one has clothes that the aristocrats wear. I haven’t gone in before, but the prices are high, so they seem finely made. The cheaper store sells things priced so that normal residents can buy things. And there are also stores that sell secondhand clothes. Sometimes there are good finds there, so I like checking it out. Which would you like?”

Personally, I wouldn’t have minded going to the expensive store, but when Fina explained the expensive store, she didn’t seem very positive about it. I wondered

if there was an issue with it—were they selective about their customers? Considering how I looked, there was a chance they wouldn’t let me in.

Maybe the normal store was for the best. I’d pass on the secondhand one this time around.

“For now, could you take me to the normal store? I’ll consider going to the other stores later.”

Fina led me where I asked. A woman in her mid-twenties greeted us inside. When she saw my clothes, she looked shocked for a moment, but immediately went back to smiling at us.

“Welcome. What kind of clothes are you looking for today?”

“Just some underwear and clothes.”

“The underwear is over there in the back. Actually, we don’t have clothes similar to the ones you’re wearing...”

“That’s fine.” *Like I’d want multiples of this outfit!*

I left the employee where she was and went with Fina to the back. Underwear came first—I needed to graduate from the bear panties. After that, with Fina’s help, I bought a shirt-like thing I could wear under the onesie, and some unremarkable, ordinary clothes to wear the rest of the time.

“Thanks, Fina.”

“Not at all. I’m glad you found something to buy. What would you like to do next?”

“Maybe go to the bookshop or a library? Are there any in this town?”

“We have a bookshop, but no library. I feel like I’ve heard an adventurer saying that they have one in the capital, though.”

“Then I guess we’ll go to the bookshop. But before that, let’s eat lunch. Do you have a place you recommend?”

“Umm, is anywhere fine?”

“Yeah.”

“In that case, I’d like to eat where you’re staying. I’ve heard it’s really good.”

“At the inn?”

“Yes, guests from outside the guild come in around this time of day, since the adventurers who stay there are usually out for work.”

“I had no idea. In that case, let’s go.”

Fina was clearly delighted by the prospect of lunch at the inn as we headed back. When we got to the inn, it was bustling with customers. A delicious aroma wafted through the air. Elena, who was carrying a load of dishes, noticed us enter.

“Welcome,” she said. “Oh, Ms. Yuna! Are you back already?”

“For lunch,” I told her.

“There’s an extra fee for lunch.”

“That’s fine. Also, do you have two open seats?”

“We’re actually completely full right now. I think seats will open in a bit.”

“Can you make the meals immediately?”

“Yes, that we can do. It’s mostly all ready to go.”

“In that case, could we eat in my room?”

“Yes, that’s no problem.”

“We’ll figure out our orders. Fina, you can get whatever you want.”

“Are you sure?” Fina said, seeming very hesitant.

“It’s fine. Once we’re done eating, I’m going to ask you to take me to the bookshop as compensation.”

“Thank you so much. In that case...”

After waiting in my room for a while, Elena brought our lunch up and I took the tray from her. The contents of the plates were still steaming. They looked delectable.

“Once you finish, it’d be such a help if you could bring the plates downstairs.”

“Got it. I’ll bring them once we’re done.”

“Sorry for asking, but I’d be much obliged.”

We set our meals side by side on the tabletop. There was fluffy bread, meat, and even a salad. *I wonder if there’s rice in this world*, I thought. *It’s only my second day, so I’ll manage...but I am Japanese, so I’m going to miss rice, soy sauce, and miso.*

“Fina, how about we eat while it’s warm?”

“Yes!” Fina happily grabbed the bread. “The bread is so soft. The meat is delicious, too.”

“Yeah, it’s good.”

Fina’s hand paused as she was eating.

“What’s wrong?”

“Um.”

“What is it?”

“Could I take half of this meal home?”

“Why?”

"I have a younger sister at home," she said, staring at her half-touched food. "I'd like to share it with her and Mom."

Aww.

"That's fine, but eat this. I'll order two—no, three more later, so you can take that home."

"Really?"

"Today is special. I won't do it tomorrow, though, so don't worry about it."

"Okay. Thank you, Yuna."

After we finished our meal, I brought the empty plates to Elena and ordered three portions to go for dinner. Our bellies full, we headed to the bookshop, which seemed to be in the opposite direction of the weapons shop. As usual, I tried not to mind the stares from the passersby as we went. I thought about wearing the clothes I'd bought, but I remembered what happened at the guild. Until I knew I was safe, I wasn't taking off the bear gear.

When we came to the bookshop, the inside was half-buried in heaps of merchandise. The books that couldn't fit on the shelves were stacked across the floor like a mountain range. It would be quite the undertaking to browse all of these.

"Welcome," a little old lady called out to us.

"Ma'am, aren't you going to organize these?"

"Oh, I know where things are. It's fine. If there's a book you'd like, just let me know."

"Really? In that case, I'd like a bestiary and something on magic, and it'd be helpful if you had maps."

"Please give me a moment." The little old lady headed into the cramped back of the shop. After a while, she reemerged with books.

"These are bestiaries." She handed me two books. "This one talks about common monsters. This one is about legendary-class monsters. I don't suppose you need this one?"

"I'd like both."

"I see. And, this is the one grimoire we have in stock. It's for beginners, I'm afraid."

“I’d like that one, too.”

“I only have maps for this town’s immediate surroundings. You won’t be able to get better ones without heading to the capital.”

She handed me a single sheet of paper.

“This works fine.”

I paid and left. I’d expected it to take a lot longer, but we’d wrapped that up in a couple of minutes thanks to the little old lady and her surprisingly good memory. And with the purchase of the books, I’d completed all my basic goals.

“Yuna, what would you like to do next?”

I hesitated before answering. “Right. Thanks to you, I got all the stuff I wanted, so I’m going to read the books in the inn. Plus, you’re probably tired after walking all over the place, aren’t you?”

I wasn’t tired because of the bear shoes, but without them I probably would have tapped out at the weapons shop and collapsed, based on my limited shut-in’s stamina.

“I’m completely fine.” Fina was right as rain. She was the very opposite of a sedentary shut-in like me, of course.

“So, what are you going to do, Fina?”

“It’s early, but I’ll go home after getting the meals from Ms. Elena.”

“Alright, then here’s your payment for today.” I handed her a silver coin.

“Are you sure? But you even ordered me dinner.”

“Like I said, it’s just for today.”

“Thanks, Yuna!”

Once I got to my inn, I parted ways with Fina, and because I had time until dinner, I went back to my room alone. I pulled the books and map from my bear storage.

I took a look at the map first. *So, these are the woods where I started*, I thought. There were some woods a bit away from the town. If you followed the path through them to the other side, it seemed like that was where the capital was. I couldn’t really tell how far it was without knowing the map’s scale, but it was probably a decent bit of

travel.

Maybe it'd be good if I headed over to the capital next? I thought. It looked like there were a few villages around. I memorized the important locations, thinking wistfully about how it'd be great if I had a more detailed map. WFO's auto-mapping would have been useful.

I pulled out the grimoire next. It was titled *Beginner-Class Magic*. I wondered if there were intermediate and advanced books, and if so, whether I could pick up copies in the capital. I flipped from page to page. *Uh-huh; right, right; I see.*

"Guess I'll give it a shot. First, I collect mana."

I tried doing it with the same motions I used in WFO. In the game, I would gather mana in my hands, and when I recited a spell, it would activate. If I collected mana in my right hand, I could invoke magic there, or I could collect and invoke it in my left hand. An ambidextrous friend of a friend got some notoriety in the community for using magic with both hands well. As for me? I was right-handed, so I collected my mana in my right hand and chanted the spell.

"Light."

I couldn't help but pay more attention to the shape of the ball of light that floated up from my open hand than the sensation of using magic. It was unmistakably a ball of light, but it wasn't a sphere. It came in the shape of a bear's head.

I got a bad feeling about it and opened up my status menu.



Name: Yuna

Age: 15 years old

Level: 8

Skills: Fantasy World Language, Fantasy World Literacy, Bear Extradimensional Storage, Bear Identification

Magic: Bear Light

Gear

Right Hand: Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Left Hand: White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Right Foot: Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Left Foot: White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Clothing: Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)

Underwear: Bear Underwear (Nontransferable)

I now had an additional tab for magic that was separate from my skills.

Bear Light

Mana collected in the bear glove creates a light in the shape of a bear.

I had to wonder: if it mentioned the bear glove, did that mean I couldn't use this magic without it? In order to test it out, I took off the glove and tried to invoke the Light magic like earlier. Just as I thought, no light appeared.

I was one with the bear.

I put the bear gloves with their round eyes back on my hand. I wanted to practice attack magic, but I couldn't do that in the inn, of course. I decided I would just read the magic book and learn what I could for today.

When dinner came around, I went back to the ground floor and

ate a great meal. I got in the bath, changed the onesie to the white bear side, and crawled into bed to clear away the exhaustion from that day.

“Goodnight.”

Chapter 9: Fina and the Bear Part One

MOM'S MEDICINE RAN OUT, and I don't have enough money to buy any more.

I live with my mom and sister, who is three years younger than me. I don't have a dad. Apparently, he died while my sister was still in my mom's belly. I don't really remember him much.

Mom can't move, since she's sick. I try to work in her place and do the best job I can, but there isn't a lot I can do, since I'm only ten. Sometimes Mr. Gentz lets me help with harvesting work at the guild. Apparently, my mom is friends with Mr. Gentz.

He's always nice to us. He gave us medicine that really helped my mom earlier.

And before that, too...

I can't make him take care of us more than he already has. The only thing I could do was go out of the town to pick herbs that would be medicine for my sick mom. I've seen the herbs all the time at the guild. I know what kinds there are.

I went out of the town and straight to the woods, where the herbs are. There are monsters deep in the woods, so I decided to search near the outskirts. I couldn't really find any, so I decided to go in a little further, and I found some!

But I was so busy picking herbs that I didn't notice the wolves surrounding me. I couldn't beat them. I ran until my legs started shaking, and I couldn't go any further.

"Someone, help..."

The wolves came closer. Right when I thought I was done for, the three wolves screamed and fell over. It all happened in a second.

How?

A person in dark clothes came out of the woods. For some reason, they were dressed like a bear.

“Are you okay?” they asked me.

“Th-thank you?”

“Why was that a question?”

The person who saved me was a girl in a cute bear outfit.

“Are you going to eat me?”

“I’m not.”

“Are you a bear?”

The girl in the cute bear outfit responded to my even weirder question by taking off the hood on her head. Her long, pretty hair fell out of her hood and I found myself smiling. I think it was because I was relieved.

The girl in the bear outfit was named Yuna and she was a pretty girl with long black hair. I’d never seen someone so pretty before. Apparently, she came from another country and was lost in the woods. I was so thankful we ran into each other. To thank her for saving me, I led her to the town.

She started walking, but I told her to please wait—we could sell the wolf meat and pelts, and the meat was soooooo good. When I explained that, Yuna told me she didn’t know how to butcher them. Maybe she came from a noble family somewhere. I could understand that after seeing how beautiful she was under the bear hood. So, with her permission, I butchered the wolves. Yuna said she’d give me half the money from selling it, and that would pay for food for days.

It seems like there’s a lot Yuna doesn’t know. She asks me a lot of questions. She really must be the daughter of some aristocrat.

We went into the town and I got in trouble with Mr. Gentz for worrying him. We sold the pelts and the meat after I took a little bit that wouldn’t go bad. Of course, I got permission from Yuna to take the meat home. It’s been a long time since I’ve had meat.

I’m grateful to Yuna.

I tried giving Yuna her half of the money, but she didn’t take it. She asked me to take her to an inn, and I thanked her, then did like she asked. The inn’s between the guild and my house. It always smells good when it’s time for food, and it has a good reputation.

We got a lot of attention on the way to the inn. Yuna’s clothes

were weird, right? I would definitely look at someone wearing weird clothes like that if they were walking around town. I was a little embarrassed, but Yuna had saved my life and she asked me for help. This was nothing.

I took her to the inn, said thank you, and went home. I made medicine from the herbs. I'm not a specialist, so I can't make high-quality medicine, but it can keep my mom's sickness away a little. We had a hearty meal with meat for the first time in a long time, and I still had money. I think I'll be able to buy something nutritious tomorrow.

I'm really thankful for Yuna.

I woke up really early the next day and, as usual, went to the guild and asked if they had butchering work. The inn I took Yuna to was on the way. I wanted to thank her again, but I thought I might be a nuisance if I went inside. Then a black bear came out. It was Yuna.

Yuna was apparently going to the guild to make an ID. I was going too, so we went together. I wanted to hold her hand, but I kept myself from doing it. The bear gloves look so soft. I want to touch them sometime.

When we got to the guild, I left Yuna to go see Mr. Gentz, but there wasn't any work for me. I was thinking of giving up and going home, but there was a commotion in the guild. Based on the voices I heard, Yuna and the adventurers were going to fight.

How did that happen? I ran to the training area in a hurry, but Yuna came over to me, smiling. She asked to borrow my knife, so I lent it to her. I didn't have a reason to say no.

The battle started. Yuna won. Her bear punch was awesome. She didn't even need the knife. When the match ended, she gave it back.

I was worried, so I waited outside while she got her guild card. This time, she came out without any trouble. I was glad. When I told Yuna that there wasn't any work today, she asked me to show her around the town, and she said she would give me a reward.

First, we went to the weapons shop. Yuna bought a sword and a hundred knives. She's rich, apparently, and it looks like one of her bear gloves is a bottomless bag. I was shocked.

Then we went to the clothes store. I wonder if Yuna doesn't have any sense of fashion. She asked me to choose clothes for her. I think

those bear clothes are sooo cute, but maybe she's going to stop wearing them. After that, it was lunchtime. She told me I could choose where we ate, so I told her I wanted to eat at the inn I took her to. It was really good. She even ordered dinner for my mom and sister.

Finally, we went to the bookshop. She picked some books, and then, I was done leading her around for the day. It was over a lot faster than I expected.

Yuna went back to the inn to read her new books. I didn't have anything else to do for the evening, so I picked up the dinner from the inn and decided to go home early. My mom and sister were really happy.

I hope tomorrow is this fun, too.

Chapter 10: The Bear Practices Magic

I WOKE UP EARLY and headed out of town after breakfast. I was going to practice magic I couldn't try at the inn.

The gate guard stepped away from his post to greet me. I was pretty sure he was the guy who helped me out a few days ago when I first came to town.

"Oh, miss in the weird clothes from earlier," he said, "are you going outside?"

"Yeah. Here's my guild card."

I showed him my guild card and held it over the crystal panel, like I'd have to even when I was leaving from now on. This one gate was the only way in or out I knew about; nobody came or went without getting their criminal record checked.

"Looks like you've become an adventurer," he said, looking over my card. "What's with this 'Class: Bear' thing?"

"Just ignore that."

"Well, it's not wrong." Saying that, he gave me a pat on my hooded head. "Whoa, it feels real nice to touch."

"Could you stop it?" I pushed his hand away.

"Yeah, sorry about that. It's dangerous out there, so be careful."

"I'm just going to practice magic a little outside."

"I see. Well, as long as you don't get close to the woods, you won't get attacked by monsters, excepting if a pack roams out a ways, and that's not usual."

"Okay, I got it."

I took my guild card back, left the town, and walked until I was sure I'd found a nice, empty spot. I would try out the physical enhancement magic that was written in the book first. It wasn't that difficult. I just needed to let mana course through my whole body.

In WFO, this sort of buff was used by pure melee tanks and DPS

classes. It didn't last for long, but it was a popular tactic for ramping up your damage output. I gave the mana circulation thing a try, then sprinted for a bit to test it out. Everything blurred around me before I skidded to a stop. I tried jumping.

“Ahhhhhhhhh!”

I jumped ten meters straight up without even really trying. When I landed, it didn't hurt. Was it because of the physical enhancement? I tried testing out all sorts of things, with and without physical enhancement; I dashed, jumped, did a bear punch, and threw a bear kick. My power had definitely increased.

I checked my status screen.

Name: Yuna

Age: 15 years old

Level: 8

Skills: Fantasy World Language, Fantasy World Literacy, Bear Extradimensional Storage, Bear Identification

Magic: Bear Light, Bear Physical Enhancement

GEAR

Right Hand: Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Left Hand: White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Right Foot: Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Left Foot: White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Clothing: Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)

Underwear: Bear Underwear (Nontransferable)

...Bear Physical Enhancement?

Bear?

Bear Physical Enhancement

Routing mana through the bear gear allows for physical

enhancement.

I closed the status screen silently, pretending I hadn't seen it, and decided to look for a place where I could practice attack magic. I wound up closer to the forest's edge.

The method in which you used magic in this world was...

1. Gather your mana.
2. Create an image of the magic you want to use.
3. Invoke the spell.

In the game you'd...

1. Gather your mana.
2. Invoke the spell.

It was easier in the game, because all you did was collect your mana and recite the incantation. I gathered my mana and could invoke my magic by just incanting "Fire."

In this world, I needed an image of something. But as someone who'd read a ton of novels and manga, and played all kinds of games, I had a plentiful repertoire of mental images to draw on. I collected my mana in my hands, imagining a blazing ball of fire.

"Fireball."

There, I thought, *that was easy*. The bear held a fireball in its mouth. It wasn't hot. I stretched out my arm, imagining it leaping out. My target was a boulder about ten meters ahead. The fireball streaked from the bear's mouth and into the boulder, demolishing it.

Just to see if I could do it, I collected my mana and pictured the fireball. It took shape just like before. I confirmed that I could do it without an incantation. Still, it was easier to imagine it when I yelled "Fireball" with my mouth, and it was faster to invoke. You needed an incantation in order to invoke magic in the game, and it was easier to invoke magic in this world by yelling the incantation.

Next, I tried using water magic.

"Waterball."

Just like before, a ball of water took shape in the bear's mouth. I took aim at another boulder and released. My target shattered, but far less dramatically than the last boulder did. *In that case*, I speculated, *I could try freezing the water first*. I imagined the mass of water turning hard and sharp and loosed another shot at the boulder. Ice arrows flew from my gloved hand and reduced it to shards.

I couldn't use fire in the woods, so ice was useful. If I had fire and water, wind and earth would make sense to try next, I guess. I wrapped the wind around my hand.

"Air cutter."

I let the wind blade go and watched it shear the next boulder right in half. *Alright*, I thought, *that leaves earth magic*. All my time spent gaming told me it was the sort of thing you'd use to pull a wall out of the ground between you and the enemy.

I collected mana in the bear and put my hand to the ground, imagining a wall coming together.

"Earth shield."

The earth rose up into a wall. I didn't know how durable it was, but it was there. With that, I had conquered the four elements, fire, water, wind and earth. I checked my status.

Name: Yuna

Age: 15 years old

Level: 8

Skills: Fantasy World Language, Fantasy World Literacy, Bear Extradimensional Storage, Bear Identification

Magic: Bear Light, Bear Physical Enhancement, Bear Fire Magic, Bear Water Magic, Bear Wind Magic, Bear Earth Magic

GEAR

Right Hand: Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Left Hand: White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Right Foot: Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Left Foot: White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Clothing: Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)

Underwear: Bear Underwear (Nontransferable)

Of course all of it came with bears tacked on.

Bear Fire Magic

Based on the mana that is gathered in the bear glove, gives the ability to use fire elemental magic.

Power is proportional to mana and the mental image.

When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

Bear Water Magic

Based on the mana that is gathered in the bear glove, gives the ability to use water elemental magic.

Power is proportional to mana and the mental image.

When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

Bear Wind Magic

Based on the mana that is gathered in the bear glove, gives the ability to use wind elemental magic.

Power is proportional to mana and the mental image.

When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

Bear Earth Magic

Based on the mana that is gathered in the bear glove, gives the ability to use earth elemental magic.

Power is proportional to mana and the mental image.

When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

In short, if I didn't have the bears, I couldn't use magic. Okay, I thought, *I get it now*. I'd already given up on ever getting rid of these

things, but there was one part that bothered me.

When imagining a bear, power increases even more.

In the spirit of scientific inquiry, I pictured flames in the shape of a bear. A bright red, flaming bear appeared in front of me.

“Uhh.”

For the time being, I let the bear go to town on a giant boulder, which promptly melted.

I didn’t want to ignite a forest fire, so I poured water on it to get it under control—but the fire didn’t extinguish when I used normal water. I conjured up a water bear that threw itself onto the spreading pool of lava, cooling it until there was only burnt sedge, steam, and a much flatter rock left.

This was dangerous—really dangerous.

After I rested a while, I heard something parting the vegetation in the woods, and a single wolf appeared. In other words, I had a new practice dummy.

I’d probably burn the woods down if I used a fireball, so I collected my mana and pictured a razor-edged shard of ice, and the way the light would play off it in rainbow patterns at this time of day.

“Ice arrow.”

It lodged itself in the wolf’s head, and the wolf stopped moving. This bear suit really did come with the most broken aimbot conceivable. Of course, the same had happened with the rocks earlier, but those weren’t moving targets. Now I knew that so long as I could aim, I’d hit.

I didn’t mind. It was useful.

I got up close to the wolf and put its carcass in my bear storage to sell off to Gentz later.

“Wolves, huh...”

In WFO, wolves were usually mobs designed for beginner players to cut their teeth on. I hesitated slightly before I decided to go deeper into the woods, running mana through my shoes so I could sprint around and jump without worrying about where or how I landed. This bear gear was just way too handy! I’d be able to use my new speed and verticality to search for wolves.

Mid-jump, I noticed a pack in the brush below me.

“I wonder if that’s too many.”

Well, if I couldn’t deal with them, I could just run away. I let myself land in the middle of them, loosing three ice arrows that drilled through three wolf heads. It looked like I could handle three at a time just fine.

“Earth shield.”

I instantly drew up a wall, and the wolves in front of me collided with it. In that moment, another wolf leapt from a rock, jaws snapping.

“Bear puuunch!”

The wolf went sailing off. Another wolf charged, and another bear punch sent it flying. There was no doubt that the power in my bear punch had risen. I’d created enough distance to start using magic again.

“Air cutter.”

I cut the nearest wolf in half, and shower of blood sprayed the air.

Yeah, I thought, *this doesn’t feel that great*. It worked like a game, but this was real, wasn’t it? I decided not to use the air cutter anymore. Maybe beating them with ice was better?

I guessed I would have to get used to it eventually. I would think about the unpleasant things later. Today was for magic practice. There were still wolves around me, after all.

I jumped high and imagined as many ice arrows as I could. Several dozen materialized. I aimed them at the howling, broken pack beneath me and released them. Of course, I couldn’t make headshots with this spray-and-pray approach, but every arrow hit somewhere in center mass. In an instant, several dozen wolves collapsed. I bear punched another wolf as I touched back down.

I cycled from magic to punches to magic, over and over again...

When the battle ended, countless wolf corpses lay scattered around me. I put them into my bear storage one by one. It would have been nice if they could disappear and turn into items.

I wasn’t hesitant about killing monsters. I’d done it plenty in WFO. The issue was the bloodstained bodies left behind. There must have been about forty in total just from this encounter.

It weighed on me enough that I decided to call it quits for the day and head back to town.

Chapter 11: The Bear Becomes E-Rank

THE GATE GUARD GUY patted my head again. I wished he'd stop treating me like a child.

I headed from the gate straight to the guildhall. Everyone's gazes fell on me all at once. They all turned away when I looked back. Since none of them would say anything to me, I headed to the front desk.

"Ms. Yuna, what business do you have with us today?" Helen asked me, so I headed towards her desk.

"I defeated some wolves in the woods, so I'm wondering what I should do in this situation. If there's a quest form on the board and I accept it, would I fulfill it right away?"

"If the quest contents just ask for the slaying of the monsters, then you would receive a quest success for bringing in mana gems as proof of slaying. However, it is a strict requirement that the mana gems be provided within a specific timeframe."

"A timeframe?"

"Because it would be an issue if someone brought in mana gems from monsters slain a month ago for a quest that came in today."

"Can you tell?"

"Yes, we can."

I shouldn't have expected less from a fantasy world.

"Wolf slaying is a standing quest, so we can accept them at any time. However, you must also have their meat and pelts. You can feed a family for a day off the meat and such—it's a staple here—and the pelts are used for clothing and such. That's why it's a standing quest."

"In that case, can I ask for that wolf quest?"

"Yes, one wolf is F-rank. Three would be considered E-rank."

"Really. Well, I've got forty for the time being, so could you take them?"

"...Ms. Yuna, what did you just say?"

I could hear voices whispering behind me. “She says she’s got forty wolves.” “That’s got to be a joke.” “How would a single person defeat them?” “But it’s *that* bear.” “Then it’s believable.” “I haven’t seen that bear in a fight.” “I saw it. Don’t get on the wrong side of that bear.”

They went on and on like that.

“Sorry,” said Helen, “but where might they be? We can’t accept just the mana gems.”

“I haven’t harvested them, but I’ve got them right here in my bottomless bag.”

“You have a bottomless bag? And one that’s big enough for forty wolves? In that case, I’m sorry, but could you come to the building next door?”

Helen led me to the neighboring building. Some guys followed behind me, probably looking forward to seeing the show. We were heading to the place where Fina and I had sold the wolf materials earlier, but I didn’t see Mr. Gentz. A different man greeted us. From where I was, I couldn’t tell if he had the day off or was in the back.

“Ms. Helen, what is it?” The male employee noticed Helen and came over to us.

“I’ve brought wolves, so could you handle them?”

“No problem. We’re not butchering anything in the warehouse at the moment.”

“In that case, Ms. Yuna, please take them out here.”

I started pulling the wolf carcasses out of my bear storage. I’d learned something important while I was stowing all those bodies: I could pull them out without putting my hand in the white bear’s mouth by visualizing what I wanted to retrieve. I held my hand over the counter and thought of wolves.

I was glad I didn’t need to touch them.

Behind me, my entourage was whispering again. “There really are forty wolves.” “Can’t expect less of the bear.” “Mess with the bear and you’ll end up like those wolves.” “I want her to punch me.” “I want her to step on me.”

It took all the resolve I still had to ignore that last part.

“I think this is it.”

“M-Ms. Yuna, did you really defeat these all by yourself?”

“I was practicing magic.”

Helen counted the wolves. “Forty-two. Looks like the meat and pelts are in good condition. We’ll also need to buy the mana gems off you; is that okay?”

“I don’t mind, but can you actually use wolf mana gems?”

“Yes. Wolf mana gems aren’t that powerful, but they’re versatile. You can make a passable lamp with one of them and a light enchantment; do the same with water and you can draw a few drams from one at a time.”

In WFO you only really saw people use these sorts of items as weapon mats, and they were only worth caring about if they were strong, but here it seemed like even the trash tier mats had practical, day-to-day value.

“We’ll go through the formalities next, so if you could come back into the guild?”

When I turned around, the peanut gallery of adventurers was all agog. For the sake of not hearing any more twisted remarks, I ignored them and followed Helen.

“We’ll count this as an E-rank quest—could you show me your guild card?”

I handed her my card. Once she had it in her hands, she looked up at me again.

“Can I ask you something?”

“What is it?”

“Did you defeat those wolves one at a time?”

“I fought the whole pack.”

“So, it was a group of forty...that would make it a D-rank quest. Please wait a moment. I’ll go consult the guild master.”

Helen came back from the back room almost immediately.

“Since you achieved the quest of slaying wolves for E-rank fourteen times, we will promote you to E-rank.”

“Are you sure?”

“I received permission from the guild master. You can fight at D-

rank level all by yourself, so you're more than qualified."

"Well, it's not like I'm gonna turn you down."

"We'll process it right now, then." She reached inside the counter. "First, this will be your retainer. That will be for the meat, pelts, and mana gems of forty-two wolves. Since the wolves hadn't been butchered, we will take twenty percent."

This must be what Fina was talking about. The twenty percent was probably the handling fee, since normal adventurers brought their stuff in already butchered. I nodded at Helen, took the leather purse with my pay, then put it in the bear storage. Lastly, I put my guild card in, too.

"You're E-rank, now. Please keep up the good work."

"Thanks."

Once I was done selling stuff, I went back to my room at the inn. I thought I might have racked up a couple levels, so I pulled up my status screen.

Name: *Yuna*

Age: *15 years old*

Level: *13*

Skills: *Fantasy World Language, Fantasy World Literacy, Bear Extradimensional Storage, Bear Identification, Bear Detection*

Magic: *Bear Light, Bear Physical Enhancement, Bear Fire Magic, Bear Water Magic, Bear Wind Magic, Bear Earth Magic*

GEAR

Right Hand: *Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)*

Left Hand: *White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)*

Right Foot: *Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)*

Left Foot: *White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)*

Clothing: *Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)*

Underwear: *Bear Underwear (Nontransferable)*

I'd gotten a new skill.

Bear Detection

Using the wild abilities of bears, can detect monsters or people.

It was a weird skill for a bear to have—it seemed like a better fit for a thief—but it would be a lot easier to find monsters with this.

Chapter 12: The Bear Gets Involved at the Guild Again

THE NEXT DAY, I headed to the guild early in the morning to pick up some quests, hoping for first pick of the good gigs. I was hoping something that involved slaying things, so I could get in some magic practice... preferably not slaying wolves, though.

While I was taking in the sights of the town on my stroll to the guild, I heard a voice from behind me.

“Yuna, good morning.”

“Good morning, Fina. Are you going to the guild today?”

“Yes, I am. Are you?”

“Well, I was thinking I’d get a little work in.”

“You were? Please be careful not to get hurt.”

“I hope you have work to do too, Fina.”

“Me too.”

Fina smiled as she reached out to take my hand (or rather my bear). I didn’t brush her off but gripped her hand back. The smile on her face grew even bigger.

I’d never had siblings, but I might have always wanted a little sister like this.

I talked to Fina as we walked, until we caught sight of the guild. “Well then,” she said, “I’m going to go ask.”

“Hope it goes well.”

I sent Fina off and hit up the guild. There was a crowd of people in front of the board. Maybe I was a little late. One of the assembled people noticed me, then two, then even more, but none of them said anything to me. But just as I thought that—

“Was it you? You the girl who beat up Deboranay?”

He was probably three or four years older than me.

“Deboranay? Who’s that?” I tilted my head. I didn’t recall the name.

“It had to be you. You’re wearing bear clothes, and you’ve got bear gloves on, and bear shoes on your feet. He said it was a girl in ridiculous clothes.”

It was true that if you searched the whole world, I was probably the only one you’d find wearing clothes like these. If there were others, I would have wanted to witness it myself.

“I don’t know who this Deboranay person is, but I think that girl in the bear outfit is probably me.”

“Thanks to you, Mr. Deboranay got hurt and can’t work.”

“Is he the guy who picked a fight with me?” That was the best guess I could manage.

“That’s right.”

Oh, I thought. I remember now.

Maybe it was the time to call on the guild master. He promised to handle it if anyone else tried giving me trouble.

“That goblin picked a fight with me; I just accepted. Then he got hurt. That’s all there is to it. I’m not to blame.”

“You calling Mr. Deboranay a goblin?!”

“He hasn’t got any manners, he bluffs that others are weaker than him, and you can’t get through to him with words. He can’t do anything without a bunch of lackies around him. He’s a goblin, no matter how you look at it.”

“Don’t screw with me!” This guy was noisy.

“As far as that incident goes,” I told him, “it all ended with him in the wrong, if I’m not mistaken.”

“There’s no way Mr. Deboranay would lose to a weird girl like you.”

A woman pushed her way between the guy and me. She was slender, blonde, and looked to be in her mid-twenties—a beauty. A giant man with muscles on par with the guild master trailed behind her.

“Lanz, please stop,” she said. “The guild master already explained. He said it wasn’t her fault.”

“But he can’t do quests because of her!”

“You know that doesn’t make it her fault.”

“Gil,” said Lanz to the giant man, “don’t you have anything to say?”

“Deboranay’s at fault,” said the giant.

“What? Even you’re siding with this weird girl?”

“If you listen to the story,” Gil went on, “Deboranay was in the wrong.”

“But she didn’t have to beat him up like that.”

I wondered if he was actually in that bad a condition. I *did* mess up his face.

“Can’t do anything about it when Deboranay’s the one at fault,” said Gil.

“That’s right,” said the woman. “He was really close to being stripped of his guild card.”

“That’s her fault too, isn’t it?”

“Uhh,” I chimed in, “if you three are going to talk amongst yourselves, can I go?”

“Oh, sorry,” said the woman. “Lanz is mad because we can’t do quests either, since Deboranay got injured.”

“It’s not like that’s my fault.”

“I know that,” said the woman.

“Can’t you just do the quests you can until Deboranay heals?”

“We already accepted it,” said Lanz.

“If we refuse to do it, then it’ll get logged as a failure.”

The failure would be recorded on their guild cards. I could see why they didn’t want that, but I still didn’t need them taking it out on me. “What if you give up the quest?”

“Then we won’t be able rank up as fast,” said Gil.

“It would figure that the first time I hear Yuna’s catching flak from her guildmates, it has to involve you three.” The block of muscles known as the guild master had arrived. Someone from the front desk must have called him.

“Guild master!” the three cried out at once.

“I told you that Yuna wasn’t in the wrong with that whole thing with Deboranay, didn’t I? You reap what you sow. Deboranay picked a fight with her and lost. You should have kept an eye on Deboranay and not left him on his own. You all knew he’s quick to a fight.”

“That’s true,” said Lanz, “but...”

“In that case, I know just how to fix this.”

“What? Will you give us a pass even if we surrender the quest?”

“I can’t do that. I can’t pretend a quest didn’t exist after you already accepted it.”

“Well what’s your great solution, then?”

“Just take Yuna here with you. We know for sure she’s stronger than Deboranay.”

The meathead was proposing something ridiculous. “No way,” I said. “Why would I take on a nonsensical quest like that?”

“Because that’d be the easiest way to get everything squared away.”

“Uh, Yuna, was it? Would you just hear us out?” the woman said. I noticed now that she was kitted out like a sorceress.

What was I supposed to do? As someone who didn’t have much experience with being in a party even in WFO, I wasn’t enthused by the prospect. I wasn’t a *total* loner, but the amount of time I’d spent in a party was pretty meagre. Still, I couldn’t think of any way to turn down the sorceress when she was looking at me like that.

Deboranay’s party and I reconvened in a separate room. The guild master, incidentally, had run off. Wasn’t that goon supposed to protect me from nuisances like this?

“Well then, we’ll introduce ourselves first. I’m Rulina. The one who was yelling at you is Lanz, and the silent one is Gil.”

“I’m Yuna.”

“Let’s start talking. The quest we accepted was goblin slaying.”

Goblin slaying? I thought. Goblins were humanoids with the brainpower of your average gnat. *Isn’t that for scrubs? How weak are these people if they need a party?*

“These aren’t just normal goblins. We need to slay a horde of at least fifty. That’s difficult without our front-liner.”

Fifty goblins. Slaying the wolf pack had been easy, and WFO’s goblins and wolves had been about the same level, so they probably were in this world, too.

“Between a group of wolves and a group of goblins, which is easier?”

“When it comes to quest rank, they’re the same. Which is easier in actual practice depends on the composition of your party. I think goblins would be easier for us.”

“Why’s that?”

“Because wolves move faster. They’re a tough enemy with a support sorceress like me. With goblins, you can just plow through them in close combat.”

Goblins, huh, I thought. I’d have to fight humanoids someday anyway. In WFO, that hadn’t been an issue, but in real life, it was uncomfortable to think about.

“It’s all your fault. Help us!”

“Lanz, keep quiet!”

I didn’t mind helping them, but I didn’t want to do it in Deboranay’s place. This Lanz guy had a bad attitude, and Gil was just looking at me silently. The only decent one was Rulina.

My honest hermit’s opinion was that working with them would be a pain. I didn’t want to help. Still, I really had injured Deboranay—but then again, it wasn’t my fault.

This was a dilemma.

“Uhhh. Can I set some conditions?”

“If it’s something we can do, then sure.”

“So, you want a share of the retainer, you slimy girl,” said Lanz.

I ignored him.

“Leave the quest entirely to me. You can take credit for its success. I’ll also give you all the money. In return, I want you to make sure that Deboranay never involves himself with me again.”

“Yuna,” said Rulina, “you’re saying we’re supposed to leave it all

to you...?”

“Are you telling us to stand around silently and watch?” said Lanz.

“What?” I said. “Why not? The achievement will be yours, and you’ll get the reward for success, too. There aren’t any downsides for you.”

“If you fail, it’ll end up being treated as our failure. It’s not like we’d accept that condition.”

“We can’t have somebody else do the quest and take credit for it. That would be shameful!”

“In that case, how about I just get help from Rulina?”

“Why only Rulina?”

“That’s obvious. She’s the one with the most decency and common sense among you, she’s the easiest to talk to, and she’s the only woman. But the number one reason is because I don’t want to work with you.”

“Why, you!!”

“Lanz, please stop.” Rulina quieted him. “Yuna, can you really beat the whole goblin horde alone?”

“I probably can. The wolf pack was easy to beat. If I had someone helping, it’d probably get in the way of my magic.”

“You can use magic? I heard you beat Deboranay with your bare hands.”

“I didn’t use magic then.” Because I hadn’t learned any at the time. “You shouldn’t need magic with a weak opponent. You wouldn’t use magic to kill a small bug, would you, Rulina?”

“...”

Lanz and Rulina’s mouths gaped in an unsightly way.

“Can you really do it?”

“It’s just fifty Deboranays, right?”

“They’re goblins!” said Lanz. Next to him, Rulina, who had been deep in thought, spoke up.

“Okay. I’ll go with you.”

“Rulina?”

“Are you fine with that, Gil?”

“Fine by me.”

“In that case, Yuna, we’re counting on you.”

“So, when are we heading out?”

“If you’re okay with it, Yuna, we can go right now.”

“Sure, but I haven’t prepared or anything.”

“That’s fine. Actually, we were planning on going first thing this morning, so we’ve finished preparing four people’s worth of day rations and the things we need for the quest.”

I ignored Lanz’s silent glare. Gil didn’t even open his mouth.

Chapter 13: The Bear Slays Goblins

OFF TO SLAY a group of goblins, Rulina and I left the guild together.

“I’m going to at least ask, but are you going out looking like that, Yuna?” she asked, looking at my bear outfit.

“I am.”

I had already given up.

“I see.”

Rulina sighed at my outfit. It wasn’t like I was wearing it because I wanted to...

“So, where are the goblins?”

“They’re in the mountains near a village about three hours east of the gate.”

“Three hours!”

“Yes, that’s why I’d like to leave early and reach the village today.”

Who asks a shut-in to walk three whole hours? I thought. If I didn’t have my bear shoes, I would have noped out at this point.

“I’ve brought water and food, so we should be fine.”

That wasn’t what I was worried about. I should have asked where we were going before I accepted, but hindsight is twenty-twenty. I sighed at the thought of the hike ahead of us as we began our walk to the village with a goblin problem.

“Umm, could I ask you something?” said Rulina.

“If I can answer it, sure.”

“Why are you wearing that? I don’t know how strong you are, but I think it would be better if you wore something more fitting as an adventurer.”

It was a question I’d seen coming for a while.

Q: Why are you dressed like that?

A1: Because I like it. (I didn't intend to lie like that.)

A2: I'd answer honestly that this equipment made me stronger.
(No idiot would reveal their greatest secrets.)

A3: I could say I couldn't use magic without the bears. (No idiot would reveal their weaknesses.)

A4: I could say it was a memento from my mother. (That wouldn't explain why I was always wearing it.)

A5: It functions as equipment in its own way. (Maybe this one was the safest answer?)

"It's stronger than normal gear."

"Really?"

"I'm not sure what material it's made out of, but the bear clothes have some physical and magic resistance, and this white bear is a bottomless bag too."

She found out about the bear storage when I sold the wolves, so I didn't need to hide that. I'd just let her think that the bear clothes were more effective than other normal equipment.

"Then what about the black bear?"

"I guess it amplifies my strength." I threw a bear punch, aiming at a rock a little ways off the path. The rock crumbled.

"So, you punched Deboranay with that? That explains why his face swelled up so much."

I was pleased by how quickly she'd accepted the little I shared.

"So, do the shoes do something too?"

"The shoes?" I said. I looked at the bear shoes and bear gloves
"Right. I've thought of something."

I grinned.

"What... Why are you looking at me like that?"

"Do you want to get to the village a little faster?"

"What're you saying?" She drew away from me slightly, like she'd sensed that something was off.

"It's such a pain walking three whole hours, so I'll do this!"

I quickly moved around to Rulina's back and swept her feet out from under her, then grabbed her the moment she fell. This was a girl's dream. I was carrying her in my arms like a princess. *Granted*, I thought, *I don't think I'd want anyone ever doing this to me.*

"Make sure you hold on tight. If you try talking, you'll bite your tongue, so be careful."

I started running.

"Wait—"

I pushed faster—faster than I'd gone before.

"Yuna, please stop—"

I ignored her and kept running. Because of the bear gloves, she was super, super light. Because of the bear shoes, I was super, super fast, and no matter how much I ran, I'd never get tired.

We reached the vicinity of the village. When I lowered Rulina to the ground, she glared at me with tears in her eyes. "Yuna, that was terrible. I kept telling you to stop, and that was my first time—I was so scared!"

"But didn't we get here a lot faster that way?" We had gotten there in thirty minutes instead of having to hoof it for three hours. "Did you wet your pants or something?"

"No! I just never thought we'd get here so quick. I was planning to gather info on the goblin problem today, and then spend the night before doing the job tomorrow!"

"Then how about we go to get the goblins now?"

"If you're not tired... Sure, let's ask the village chief about the goblins."

We greeted the gate guards at the village entrance.

"What's with that outfit? Are you an adventurer?" After giving me a once-over, the lead guard looked Rulina over next.

I guessed that the outfit comment was meant for me, which meant that the other question must have been Rulina's to answer.

"We are adventurers. We came to deal with your goblins," Rulina explained.

"Just you two?"

He looked anxious. Of course he would be. Even though there were tons of goblins and they'd put out a quest, only two girls had shown up—one of them in costume. Everything about this was worrying.

"Yes. We'd like to hear more about it, so can we meet with the village chief?"

The guard led us to a building in the middle of the village that was slightly larger than the rest. "Is the chief in?" he called.

"What is it, Roy?" A man who looked like he was in his fifties emerged.

"Some adventurers came for us."

"Oh, they came. Now we have some relief..." His face dropped the moment he looked at me. "Um, excuse me, but is it just you two?"

"Yes, it's the two of us," said Rulina, "but we'll get the job done, so please don't worry."

"I see."

He looked at us with the same unease the guard had. *Appearances really are important*, I thought. *I'd be leery too if some little girl in a onesie turned up saying, "I've come to deal your goblin problem."*

"We would like you to tell us as much as you can about where you saw the goblins." Rulina ignored the village chief's attitude and continued the conversation.

"You'll encounter the goblins in the mountain pass," said the chief, pointing out a nearby massif. "The hunters have seen them multiple times."

"The reports said you were dealing with about fifty. Is that just an estimate?"

"We sent several of our own into the mountain. One died to ensure the rest returned. They saw as many as you say."

"I see. Then we'll head over. If we don't come back by tomorrow, please tell the guild."

"Understood. We're in your hands."

We left the village, following the path to the mountain.

"Yuna, can you really do this alone?"

“It’ll be fine. I just have one thing to ask you to do. Please remove the mana gems.”

“I’m fine doing that.”

My skin crawled hearing her confirm my suspicion: bringing back proof-of-slaying meant cutting it out of a pile of goblin corpses. *Yup*, I thought, *no way!* Blessedly, goblins couldn’t be used for materials, so we had absolutely no reason to transport the whole bodies home.

“Then let’s go,” I said. “I’ll walk ahead, so you follow behind.”

I pulled my hood down, engaging bear detection. There was a dense cluster of *something* in one direction. It was inconvenient that I couldn’t use a map, but it was useful to know our bearing. Pressing forward, I detected something hazardous. I resolved to press on right through them.

“Uhh, you seem to be doing okay walking blind,” Rulina said, “but I think you should be a little more aware of your surroundings.”

“It’s okay. I’m using detection magic, so I know there aren’t any monsters nearby.”

“There’s magic like that?!”

“But there are a lot more than I expected.”

“More than expected?”

“I think there might be around a hundred?”

“Wait, a hundred! Really? We definitely can’t defeat that many.”

“Why not? That’s just a hundred Deboranays.”

“Are you serious about that?”

“I’m saying it, aren’t I?”

Rulina sighed. “I’ll tell you this now: if things get rough, I’m going to leave you and run, Yuna.”

“I wouldn’t mind.” I could outrun her anyway.

“Ahh, are things really going to be okay?” she said. “Maybe this was a mistake.”

One hour later, we’d killed about twenty goblins as we walked through the wooded foothills of the mountain. All we had left to do was

wipe out their nest.

“You called that trick detection magic, right?” said Rulina. “It’s pretty useful to know where the goblins are. It almost feels like cheating. You could pair that with a long-range spell and wipe them out all at once.”

“Make sure you take the mana gems.”

“I know.”

She cut into the goblins collapsed in front of her, pulled out their mana gems, and finished things off by burning the bodies to make sure they wouldn’t attract scavengers—monster or otherwise.

“Looks like the goblin nest is up ahead,” I told her.

I’d learned from WFO that surprise attacks were most effective on groups. You’d slip in under their aggro, attack with the strongest magic you could in one blow, then keep the pressure on with faster, lower-level spells while they were too surprised to do anything.

I figured I needed to keep going forward until I reached a place where I could confirm them by sight, at least.

“Looks like it’s that cave.”

“You’re not telling me we’re going in there, right?”

Even I didn’t want to go into a cave containing a goblin horde. There were about five goblins around the cave entrance—probably the guards.

“I’m going to check on something, so wait here.”

I incanted a wind spell, aimed at the cave mouth, and released. The spell coaxed the wind into every nook and cranny of the cave.

“Confirmed it. That’s the only entrance. I’m going to go over, so wait here.”

“Wait, are you really going?”

Before they could react, I decapitated the guards with an air cutter. After that, I imagined a burning red bear.

“Bear Fire.”

I threw bear-shaped fire into the cave and incanted the next spell.

“Bear Wall.”

A bear-shaped boulder blocked off the cave entrance. Now it was done. All we had to do was wait.



“Yuna, what did you do?”

“I threw a thermobaric blast into the cave and closed off the exit. All the oxygen in there should be burning off, so the goblins that don’t vaporize will probably suffocate.”

“Oxygen? Suffocate?”

Do they not know what oxygen is in this world? I thought.

“To put it simply, there isn’t any air in that cave.”

“Really?”

“When you put a fire in a sealed-up place, the air disappears. So the goblins probably aren’t doing so great without anything to breathe around now. This is easy, right? Or did you want to fight them in the cave?”

Rulina shook her head energetically.

“We’re going to have some time to kill, so after you handle the goblin guards, how about we have lunch?”

“We’re eating here?” she said, seeming unhappy about it.

She probably didn’t want to have a meal in a place where she wouldn’t be able to tell when a goblin could come to attack us, but I was fine as long as I had detection magic.

“We could go back to the village, but it’d be kind of a pain.”

“It would be, but how long do we have to wait?”

“Normally a few minutes, I think? Anyway, I’m planning on using detection magic and waiting until they’re all gone.”

For the time being, I had Rulina take care of the goblin corpses in front of the entrance. Afterwards she sat down with me and pulled out lunch from the bag that was hanging on her hip. *So that’s a bottomless bag*, I thought.

“How much can fit in that bag?”

“In this? It won’t fit as much as your bear, Yuna. I think it could fit about five wolves.”

If that was the standard, this bear was a deeply OP item. I ate the meal she had prepared, but it wasn’t that great, just dried jerky and lukewarm water. It seemed that time progressed like usual in normal bottomless bags. I should have prepared my own lunch.

After lunch, I pulled my hood back down.

“Huh?” I said.

“What’s wrong?”

“One of them is still alive.”

“One of them...it couldn’t be.”

“What is it?”

“Yuna, you said there were about a hundred goblins in total, right?”

“Yeah.”

“That might be a goblin king.”

“The goblin king...”

A goblin king...the leader of the goblins, and no doubt stronger and smarter. They were early-game bosses in WFO, too.

“Well, it doesn’t seem like it’s going die, so I guess we have to fight it.”

“You can’t! A goblin king is C-class; you’d need an entire C-class party.”

I got where she was coming from, but I figured we could handle a boss with strictly physical attacks. It was dangerous if we got hit, but I didn’t intend to let that happen.

“We should go back to the guild and get reinforcements.”

“Hmm, I think it’ll probably be fine.”

“Yuna, please. Please listen to me on this.”

“In that case, I’ll go into the cave to fight alone. If I don’t come out, get reinforcements from the guild.”

“Are you telling me to let you go to your death?”

“Like I said, it’ll be fine. Okay, I’m moving the rock.”

“Yuna!”

I ignored her shout and made the boulder in the entrance disappear. Hot wind blew out of the cave. I cycled out the air inside the cave with a wind spell, but the entrance was still hot.

“I can’t go in when it’s like this.”

“Then let’s go home!”

“Hm? It looks like the king is coming out himself.”

“You’ve got to be joking...”

“You hide behind me, Rulina.”

A goblin several sizes larger than usual came out from the cave. He held an ominous sword in its hand. When it saw me, he howled loud enough to make the ground rumble.

So, I thought, *this is the goblin king*. I loosed an air cutter, but the king brought down his sword and cut it aside. Then he fixed his gaze on me and charged, bellowing. I pulled my sword out of my bear storage, blocking the goblin king’s sword as it came down on me. The blow forced me back, and the goblin king swung his free arm.

I was still sent flying, even when I defended against it with my white bear, but I circulated some mana to my shoes and closed the distance again.

Maybe my level wasn’t high enough? I thought. *If normal magic didn’t work on him, then how about bear magic?*

“Bear cutter.”

I imagined a bear’s sharp claws as I aimed at the goblin king and brought my bear glove down. Three wind blades slashed at the goblin king. He swung his sword in the same way he had earlier, trying to destroy what I conjured, but this time the bear cutter kept up its assault.

“Huh?”

It didn’t bring him down. Though the goblin king was bloodied by my bear cutter, it didn’t cut through him.

“He’s tough.”

Still, now I knew I could damage him. Perhaps frustrated that he was hurt, the goblin king cried out and glared at me again. He started running.

I guessed we’d decide the match soon, now. I loosed an earth spell, and a deep hole opened in front of the goblin king. His anger had made all his blood rush to his head. Too busy looking at me to watch his feet, he tumbled right in.

I was afraid that if I dropped bear fire on him I’d melt him, mana gem and all, so I aimed several bear cutters into the hole.

“Bear cutter, bear cutter, bear cutter, bear cutter, bear cutter.”

He was a lot more tenacious than I thought. I could hear his bellows from the bottom of the hole. He might have been trying to climb out, but my bear cutters were probably keeping him down.

After a while of throwing bear cutters, I stopped hearing his shouts. When I looked through my hood, the goblin king’s signal had disappeared. I stopped casting, and Rulina came out from the shadows of the trees.

“Is it over?”

“He’s dead.”

“I can’t believe you could actually beat a goblin king.”

“I was a little surprised—he was stronger than I thought. I’m going to make sure he’s dead, so move away from the hole.”

I used earth magic to raise the ground at the bottom of the hole. The goblin king that came into view was dead, his body frozen in a silent scream. His face still struck fear in me.

“He really is dead, right?”

“Yeah.” Just to dispel Rulina’s fears, I hit the goblin king’s motionless body with an air cutter. “So, what should we do with this?”

“Yuna, he’ll fit in your bottomless bag, right?”

“He would.”

“Then, could you do that? His mana gem would be proof enough, but if we can, I’d like to bring home the corpse.”

I put the goblin king in the bear storage, taking care to pick up his sword separately, then cooled the cave with a couple wind and water spells. “The cave should be fine to go in now, I think. Could you do the rest?”

“Uhh, I’m going to just confirm, but is the cave safe?”

“It’s fine. But there are a lot of dead goblins, so I think hacking them up is going to be a lot of work.”

“Yuna, what would you think of helping—”

“Nope.” I was absolutely not going to cut open goblin corpses to harvest their mana gems. Having turned Rulina down flat, I then conjured up a bear-shaped light. “It’s dark in there, so here’s a present.

You can take it with you.”

“Thanks? I don’t really get why it’s bear-shaped, but I’m grateful.”

Rulina went into the cave alone. The work of getting a mana gem out of a goblin took a minute per goblin at the fastest, and there were probably about eighty in the cave. Factoring in how long it would take for her to move around the cave, I was probably looking at a two-hour wait.

I erected a small house with earth magic and gave it a little window for ventilation. Once I was in, I sealed the entrance behind me to keep out any monsters that might happen by. Finally, I made a pallet of earth and laid down. It was hard, but not impossible to sleep on. I’d have to buy myself a blanket.

I was worn out, so sleep came to me quickly.

Chapter 14: The Bear Reports

“YUNA! YUNA! Wake up.”

“Rulina, you’re being too loud.” I rubbed my sleepy eyes as I roused.

“You’re finally awake,” said Rulina, peeking in through the tiny window. “I was out there working my butt off prying these out while you were making a house and taking a cat nap? That’s so unfair.”

“But butchering is your work, isn’t it? Are you done?” I straightened and stretched my joints.

“Yeah. I came out of the cave and was shocked to find a house. And when I looked in, you were asleep! And I couldn’t get in, because there isn’t a door!”

I parted the walls to make a door and exited the house with magic. The sun was starting to get low in the sky, so it was probably around three?

“There were way too many goblins. It was so hard—all because you didn’t help.”

I ignored her and changed the subject. “Do you need anything else from the cave?”

“Don’t think so.”

“Then I’m going to seal it up, since we wouldn’t want any other monsters holing up in there.”

I plugged it up with an earth spell.

“So,” I said, “guess we can go home now.”

“Well, I’m tired.”

“That’s fine. I’ll carry you.” I didn’t want to take my time getting home.

“Yuna...you’re not thinking of...”

“We’re in the mountains and the roads aren’t great, so hush.”

With a grin, I scooped up Rulina, who looked like she had given

up, and started heading down the mountain.

Jump! Jump! Jump! Every time I leapt, Rulina would scream, which was kind of noisy right next to my ear, but I ignored her and kept running. Once we neared the village, I let Rulina down and we headed to the gate. Rulina seemed a little unsteady on her feet, but it was probably my imagination.

We greeted the gate guard and headed to the village chief's house.

"Uhh, it seems you've come back early. Was it an impossible endeavor?" The village chief's face seemed to say, *I thought so*.

"No," said Rulina, "we defeated all the goblins."

"What was that?" His expression changed to shock.

"We've completed your goblin slaying quest. These are their mana gems."

Rulina pulled a leather purse out of her bottomless bag. She untied it, showing the village chief its contents. It was probably filled with the goblins' mana gems, but I wasn't about to look in there. I didn't want to see a bunch of bloody mana gems. That would spoil my dinner.

"It seems you *have* slain the goblins. But isn't this a bit more than expected?"

"There were about a hundred there."

"A hundred?!" The village chief was beside himself. Fair enough, given he'd just found out there were twice as many goblins threatening his village as he'd thought.

"Please be at ease. We defeated all of them. We also found the nest the goblins were using as their base, cleaned it out, and sealed it up, so we don't think any new monsters will take up residence there."

"Th-thank you so very much." The village chief bowed his head. "Please allow us to prepare an inn for you to stay in tonight."

"Yes, thank you."

"No, we're heading home."

Rulina and I spoke at the same time. We looked at each other.

"Yuna, it's getting late."

"We can get home before sunset."

“You’re not planning on carrying me again are you?”

“Two times, three times, what’s the difference?”

“But they’re being so kind to us.”

“I believe in getting bothersome things over with quickly.”

“Oh, fine,” Rulina conceded reluctantly. “I have to report on the goblin king anyway.”

Once the villagers were done thanking us, we left. I must have scared the living daylight out of Rulina after taking all those death-defying leaps on our way down the mountain, because this time, she grabbed hold of me herself. “Please be gentle when you’re running. Also, no jumping—at all!”

“Okay, okay.”

“I hate to say it, but it’s really comfortable in this bear thing’s arms.”

Rulina patted the sleeve of my onesie. I wasn’t thrilled about being touched like that, so I grabbed her and broke into a sprint to forestall any more petting. The ground was even here, so it was easier to run than on the mountain.

I detected monsters far off but ignored them and ran past. Occasionally, we passed by some adventurers and carriages, but I ignored them too. They were raising kind of a hubbub as they traveled, but at the speed I was going, I’d be out of earshot in a second.

I caught sight of the town’s gate.

“This is kind of embarrassing,” said Rulina, “so could you let me down soon?”

She started to say something into my ear, but I ignored her and kept running.

“Y-Yuna? Please?”

Rulina clutched me tighter, but it didn’t hurt. I just went straight to the west gate, taking the guard by surprise with my arrival. Rulina was red in the face as I let her down and silently handed over my guild card. The guard silently checked it, and we went silently into town.

“Uh, so, want me to carry you to the guild?”

“Stop!”

Rulina was still flushed as we headed to the guild together to give our report. There were quite a few adventurers loitering around the guild entrance, but just when I was wondering how we'd get through them, they noticed me and a path opened up, like the sea parting for Moses.

When we entered the guild, the front desk was crowded. Someone called to us as we tried to get in line.

"Rulina, what happened?" Lanz and Gil were sitting in chairs, watching us.

"Lanz, why are you here?"

"Why? Because we thought you'd come back, and it looks like we were right. If you're back this early, you must have come running home with your tail between your legs because of how many goblins there were."

Lanz smirked, clearly pleased by the prospect. Did he realize that us failing the quest meant that he'd be failing it. too?

"Lanz," said Rulina, "we finished the quest. Unfortunately."

"Wha?!" His dumb face grew even more vacant looking.

"We finished the quest. A hundred goblins, plus a goblin king to boot."

"What? What're you saying? A hundred goblins? A goblin *king*? That's not even funny."

"It's not a joke."

Thanks to Lanz's big mouth, all the adventurers inside the guild were looking at us at this point, whispering among themselves. "A hundred goblins?" "A goblin king?" "They must be kidding." "There's no way they could have beaten a goblin king." "But it's *that* bear." "It is that bear." "Maybe that bear really could do it?" "Yeah, I mean, it's a bear."

Seriously—did they think it was *because* I was a bear?

Helen drew us aside at this point. "I'd like to ask you a few questions. If you could come this way..."

She led us to a desk off to the side, away from most of the people. "Now, I'd like to hear what happened. The quest you accepted was to defeat a group of goblins that had appeared near the village of Touz,

was it not? A group of about fifty?”

“Yes, but when we got there, there were a hundred of them.”

“Excuse me for saying this, but do you have the mana gems as proof of defeat?”

Rulina pulled the leather pouch she’d shown the chief out of her bottomless bag.

“Would you allow me to examine these?” Helen accepted our mana gems and operated some equipment inside the desk. “Ah—yes, there is no mistake. They are mana gems from creatures slain today. I also heard something about a *goblin king*. Was that true?”

“Yes, the nest was run by a goblin king.”

“Is that true? In that case, you should have sent an urgent quest for a C-rank party...”

“It was fine. Yuna defeated them.”

“She defeated a goblin king all on her own...” “The bear defeated a goblin king.”

“The bear...”

“The bear...”

Echoes of those last two words spread across the guild.

“Is that really true? If you have the mana gem, could you please show me?”

“Well, we brought the corpse instead.”

“Ah, so it must be in your bear of holding, right Yuna? Um, it must be quite large. If you could make your way to the room next door...”

The adventurers trailed behind us like goldfish poo.

“Could you take it out here, please?”

I held up the white bear and pulled out the corpse. Gasps, shouts, groans, and all kinds of sounds came from around us.

If looks could kill, everyone laying eyes on the face of the goblin king’s corpse would have dropped dead then and there. Our entourage cringed at the sight of it. They could see the many wounds on the goblin king’s flesh, which spoke to the fierce battle we had.

“Thank you very much. May we buy the corpse from you here right now?”

“You can use it?”

“Yes. Unlike goblins, a goblin king’s skin is tough and durable, so we can use it to make protective gear. Its bones can also be used for weapons and enchanted items, as can its mana gem.”

“I’m fine with that, but what about you, Rulina?”

“I’m fine with it too.”

“In that case, would you return to the front desk with me?”

We returned to the desk, still trailed by our goldfish poo string of onlookers.

“Rulina’s party accepted this quest. Since Yuna helped, how would you like to proceed?”

“Please count this as a collaborative quest with my party and Yuna.”

“Rulina?” I questioned.

“You’re the one who defeated it, and we can’t take credit for that. All I did was harvest the mana gems and talk to people.”

“Understood,” said Helen. “Then we will treat it that way. Could all of the party members, Ms. Rulina included, please present their guild cards?”

“I’m fine.”

“Lanz?”

“I didn’t do anything. I actually thought she’d come running back here and was just watching. All I did was laugh at her and think she could never defeat a whole goblin horde all on her own.”

“Gil?”

“I don’t need it either. I didn’t do anything.”

“Understood. In that case, we will process this quest as being fulfilled by Ms. Rulina and Ms. Yuna. Are you fine with that?”

“Yes, please do that.”

“Then this will be the sum for buying back the goblin mana gems and the quest fee. In addition, this is the bonus money for buying back

the goblin king.”

She handed us two bags. Rulina handed the goblin king bonus to me, and also divided the quest fee money in half before handed that to me, too. I accepted it modestly and put it in my bear storage.

“Sorry for what happened before. I’ll talk to Deboranay for sure. Lanz, too.”

“No, it was fun for me! Plus I got to practice magic on a goblin king.” That had been an enlightening experimenting.

When we left the guild, Rulina invited me out to dinner with the party. We ended up eating at a restaurant she liked with Lanz and Gil. Lanz finally lowered his head and apologized. Gil also apologized for not coming along to slay goblins. I accepted their apologies and paid for the meal.

“Are you sure?” they asked.

“Yeah. I got the goblin king bonus, and you can think of it as Deboranay’s medical treatment fees.”

“I see. In that case, we’ll gladly accept the meal.”

“Thank you.”

The four of us enjoyed the food and went back to the inn. I told Elena that I didn’t need dinner, went back to my room, and climbed into bed without even taking a bath.

Chapter 15:

The Bear Takes a Rainy Day Off

Part One

IT STARTED RAINING the next morning and didn't stop, so I holed up in my inn room and read my bestiary to pass the time. Most of the creatures in it were the standard fantasy fare you'd expect to find in RPGs, light novels, and manga. Maybe I could travel the world trying to find as many of them as I could.

After reading a while, my stomach told me it was time for food, so I went downstairs to get lunch. Despite the rain, there were tons of customers in the dining room. When I asked Elena about it, she said, "Oh, it's because the rain apparently did away with all the street vendors. The customers gather at places where they're protected from the downpour."

I looked around the dining hall and couldn't seem to find a place to sit. I didn't really want to share a table, so I was about to leave.

"Ms. Yuna, sorry, but it seems we don't have seating, so would you be able to eat in your room?"

"Yeah, that's fine. Please bring me the special for today."

"Understood. I'll bring it to your room right away."

About five minutes after I got back to my room, there was a knock at the door. *That was faster than I expected*, I thought.

"Ms. Yuna, could you open the door?"

When I opened it, Elena was carrying a steaming meal. Because lunch fees weren't included in the cost of rent, I put the meal on the table and paid Ms. Elena.

"Thank you."

"Break a leg out there, Elena."

"Yes, this is the time for making money," she answered me lightheartedly before going back to work.

I gratefully ate the meal on the table. It was a veggie stir fry with meat in it, and warm soup with freshly baked bread. I nibbled at the

bread, though I was starting to yearn for rice. I wanted to have ramen, too, but I didn't know whether they would have it in this world. Next time, I'd try asking Elena.

I finished my meal and started thinking about what to do with my afternoon. I pulled up my status screen.

Name: Yuna

Age: 15 years old

Level: 18

Skills: Fantasy World Language, Fantasy World Literacy, Bear Extradimensional Storage, Bear Identification, Bear Detection, Bear Map

Magic: Bear Light, Bear Physical Enhancement, Bear Fire Magic, Bear Water Magic, Bear Wind Magic, Bear Earth Magic

EQUIPMENT

Right Hand: Black Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Left Hand: White Bear Glove (Nontransferable)

Right Foot: Black Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Left Foot: White Bear Shoe (Nontransferable)

Clothing: Black and White Bear Clothes (Nontransferable)

Underwear: Bear Underwear (Nontransferable)

I'd gained a new skill. Bear Map? *Seriously, you can't just tag "bear" onto everything.*

Bear Map

Any area seen through the bear's eyes can be made into a map.

Bear Map invoked a map with me at the center and indicators of the town's surroundings, the eastern woods, and the area around the village where the goblins had appeared. All the other areas were pitch-

black and showed nothing. It felt like a feature ported right over from WFO. It was useful, but I could only see places I'd already been to. I supposed it would have taken the sense of discovery out of things if a map of the whole world had suddenly unfolded before me.

Something came to mind after I saw the goblin king's cave marked on my map, and I pulled the sword the king had been carrying out of my bear storage. It didn't seem as sinister in my hands as it had in his. It had turned into an elegant sword with a silver glint to it.

I used Bear Identification on it.

Goblin King's Sword

Skills: Boost Physical Strength, Supplement Magic

Boost Physical Strength: Increases the strength of the user.

Supplement Magic: The sword can be supplemented with magic.

The sword's previous ominous vibe was probably a direct expression of the goblin king's power. When I sent mana through it, it glittered a pretty silver. Maybe I'd try it out when the rain was gone.

But it didn't seem like the rain would be stopping anytime today, so I went over my to-do list. I was used to being alone at home, but I always had something to play, or read, or watch. Minus all of that, I ended up super bored. The only other thing I could do was sleep, but if I slept in the afternoon, I wouldn't be able to sleep at night. All the things I'd spend a sleepless night doing back in Japan were things I couldn't do here. I needed to get creative.

It bugged me a little to see myself holding the goblin king's sword with my flabby jelly arms, so I decided to try working out. It might have been because of the bears, but no matter how many times I did push-ups—whether it was ten or a hundred times—I didn't get tired. I'd never be able to bulk up my arms like this.

With that thought in mind, I took off the bear equipment and stripped to my underwear. Well, I was wearing a shirt on top, but the only bottoms I had on were the bear underwear. The underwear I'd bought the other day felt so scratchy that I didn't wear them. Maybe I'd go to the high-end store next time.

I tried doing a pushup. I couldn't even do ten. Nothing had changed since when I was in Japan. I gave up on my jelly arms and obediently decided to wear the bear. Scary as it was, I was starting to become more and more at home in the peculiar outfit.

Chapter 16: The Bear Takes a Rainy Day Off Part Two

I GAVE UP ON WORKING OUT and I decided to look for things to do downstairs. The dining room was packed like it was during lunch, but right now no one was eating. Elena sat at the counter, looking tired.

“Oh, Ms. Yuna,” she said, “sorry about earlier.”

“I didn’t mind.”

“So, what do you need?”

“I’m just trying to kill some time.” I sat down at the counter.

“We don’t really have anything for that.”

“Well, could I get something to drink?”

“Yes, you may.” She went into the back and came back with two glasses, one of which she handed to me. “Here, try this. It’s mira fruit juice.”

I thanked her and accepted the juice. It was a little sweet and sour, if a bit lukewarm, unfortunately. Then again, if it was lukewarm... I just had to cool it down. I put the black bear hand on the cup, called up some mana, and pictured ice forming into neat cubes. There was a plunking sound, and ice floated in the cup.

“Wait, what is that?”

“I just put some ice in the juice,” I said. “I thought it’d be better cooled down.”

I took a sip. I’d made it several levels more delicious.

“C-could you do that for me, too?”

Elena offered her cup to me as I savored my juice. I didn’t have a reason to turn her down, so I dropped some ice into her cup.

“Thank you so much.” Elena swished the ice around in the cup and drank it once it was cool. “It—it’s so good. I can’t believe it tastes so much better when it’s colder! This might be great on hot days. But I don’t really have space in the refrigerator to keep juice cool.”

Refrigerators existed in this world. You could make a basic one with any old mana gem, so long as you charged it with ice magic, but if you wanted a fridge with a freezer, you needed an ice-type mana gem. Up north, my bestiary explained, you could find ice-aligned monsters to harvest them from, but the difficulty and the distance involved meant refrigerators with a freezer compartment were luxury items.

“If only my refrigerator were a little bigger...” Elena sipped wistfully at the iced juice.

“Can you not use magic, Elena?”

“Of course not. If I could, I wouldn’t be the daughter of an innkeeper. I’m jealous you can, Yuna.”

The user’s guide for the bear gear said that you had to channel mana through it, so I knew I at least possessed mana, like all the people of this world. And yet, I couldn’t use magic if I wasn’t wearing the bear gear. Elena also had mana, but she was saying she couldn’t use magic. I didn’t really get what the relationship between mana and magic was in this world, but maybe she was the same as me when I wasn’t wearing the bear gear.

Maybe, with time, I might be able to get to a point where I could use magic without the bears?

In the end, Elena and I chatted until it was time for dinner. I was happy to have found something to do, but Elena got a talking-to from her mom for not doing her work.

Chapter 17: The Bear Gets into Trouble and Rises to D-Rank

AFTER SLAYING THE GOBLIN KING, I accepted more quests at the guild and got a lot of experience...

...in applying magic, at visualizing spells, at figuring out how powerful my bear magic was.

...in using the goblin king's sword and channeling mana through it.

...in using throwing knives.

...in finding out how powerful my bear offense and defense was.

I had verified all kinds of things in the past few days. Most recently, I confirmed how much I could put into the bear storage and how big it was. I put away the wolves that had been my guinea pigs for the day and went to report to the guild.

"Ms. Yuna," said Helen, "did you *just* bring back wolves today, too?"

"Yeah," I said, "that's right."

"Really?"

"Why are you asking me that?"

"Lately adventurers on slaying quests have been coming back emptyhanded."

"..."

"It seems there are no monsters out there to slay."

"..."

"When adventurers go to slay goblins, the goblins are nowhere to be seen."

"..."

"If there's a village requesting orc slaying, the orcs are gone before they know it."

“...”

“When they go out to slay kobolds, there are none.”

“...”

“Some go to just slay horned hares and find none.”

“...”

“And this hasn’t just happened once or twice. Do you know anything about this?”

She gave me an inquisitive look. The answer was a most definite YES. Everything she named, I’d killed. I still had them put away in my bear storage.

“I see,” I said. “That sure is too bad for the adventurers who took those quests.”

Helen sighed deeply at my attempt to play dumb. “It seems that they’ve witnessed a girl in a cute black bear costume many times before going out to slay monsters. Is she possibly a friend of yours?”

She silently looked me right in the eyes. I kept myself from looking away, even though I wanted to.

“Maybe my outfit is just trending right now?”

“There’s no way that’s the case! The only one dressed that way is you! It’s only you!”

“If you knew already, then you could have just said so from the beginning.”

“The guild master told me to call you over if you came in.”

“Why? It’s not like I was stealing their quests or anything. It’s just when I happened to head over there, I just happened to defeat some monsters because they were around.”

“Yes, there’s no issue with that. Especially since you haven’t taken the quest money.”

“In that case...”

“But, since you’re registered at the guild, we’d like you to report the monsters you’ve slain as part of your duties. In that case, the adventurers who took those quests won’t be given failures.”

“I got it. I’ll report it from now on.”

“However, I still need you to meet with the guild master today.”

“Seriously?”

“Yes, *seriously*. I’m going to escort you there right now, so come with me, please.”

Helen dragged me to the guild master’s room.

“Guild master,” she said, knocking at the door. “I’ve brought over Ms. Yuna.”

“Come in.”

Helen led me inside. The guild master was there, working at a desk.

“So, you’ve arrived. You can go back to work, Helen. Yuna, you sit down right there.”

He pointed at a table in the middle of the room. There were about six seats lined up in front of the table. I picked one at random.

“So, what are you up to?”

“What am I up to?”

“Just as I thought, you’ve slain monsters that were part of other people’s quests and never reported them. You didn’t even try to retrieve the quest money. You didn’t try to sell the materials, either. What is your goal?”

Killing time, practicing magic, practicing with my sword, checking out monsters, making maps—there were a ton of things.

“I just got to this town, so I’m getting familiar with the area. I just killed monsters when I happened across them.”

“In that case, why didn’t you report to the guild?”

“I just joined, so I had no idea.”

I hadn’t known it was my duty to report monsters I’d slain, other than the ones I accepted quests for. It was Helen’s fault for not telling me that.

“And why didn’t you sell back the materials?”

“I don’t need the money.”

“But won’t it be bad if they start rotting in your bottomless bag?”

Right, I thought, normal bottomless bags couldn’t stop time.

“Umm, could you keep this between us?”

“What is it? I’m not the type to give away other people’s secrets.”

“My bottomless bag can stop time, so it’s fine because nothing spoils.”

“Really?”

I laid out a couple of older wolf carcasses on his desk to prove my point. “I defeated these three days ago.”

The guild master looked them over. “They’re still warm.”

I popped them back into my bear storage so they wouldn’t bleed on his desk. “They won’t rot, so it’s fine.”

“I’ve heard enough. Make sure you report your kills from now on. If you don’t, you’ll get the other adventurers into trouble.”

“Okay, I got it. Can I go now?”

“One more thing. Did you slay some orcs?”

“I did.” There was no point in lying, so I answered honestly.

“I see. Then we’ll promote you to D-rank, starting today.”

“Is it really okay for me to go up in rank that easily? I haven’t accepted any quests from rank D yet. Don’t I need to accept at minimum ten quests?”

“If you can defeat orcs and goblin kings on your own, that’s not an issue. Plus, you must have over ten orcs inside that bottomless bag of yours, right?”

He was in the right ballpark.

“Also, I’m sorry, but I’ll need you to sell the orc corpses to the guild. If the guild doesn’t occasionally supply monster parts to the stores, it reflects badly on us.”

“Got it.”

A female guild employee led me back to Helen at the front desk. She told Helen what the guild master had said and returned to her own work.

“Ms. Yuna, congratulations on your rank increase.”

“Thanks.”

Helen put the guild card on the crystal panel and started tinkering

with it, reminding me that I still didn't get how the crystal panels could share data across the world.

"The guild has a request," she said, "if you would be so kind."

"What's that?"

"Could you avoid killing wolves in this area for a while? You are free to kill things, of course, but it causes trouble for beginner adventurers trying to make a living."

"Well, I'm supposed to be a beginner, too." I hadn't even been an adventurer for that long.

"I wouldn't call you a beginner. Beginners can't defeat goblin hordes, goblin kings, and orcs."

She had a point. "I got it. I just need to not battle them for a while, right?"

"Thank you very much. We would like low-level adventurers to be able to gain experience and rise in rank, and the most suitable things for them to fight are wolves and goblins."

"Wait, so should I ease off the goblins, too?"

"Goblins multiply quickly, so you don't need to hold back there. If anything, please kill as many of them. They're an unpopular target, since you can't sell the parts."

I took my guild card back. I was at D-rank now. "So can I go home now?"

"Yes, you may. But sell the material before you go."

I left the guild and headed next door.

Chapter 18: The Bear Sells Things

I LEFT THE GUILD and headed to the exchange counter next door. Two of the three counters were serving customers, so I naturally went to the open one.

“Yo, bear girl. You selling wolves again?” Mr. Gentz said, smiling as he greeted me.

“I have other monsters, too.” I pulled ten wolves out of my bear storage. The adventurers in the room broke into slight consternation at the sight of them.

Mr. Gentz called over two employees from the back and directed them to move the wolves. When the counter cleared, I pulled out ten horned hares next. The commotion around me in the room grew even louder. Incidentally, horned hares were meter-long bunnies. They looked cute, but they could jump like hell, and if you didn’t have good defenses, they could run you through with their horns.

“What? You’ve even got horned hares? These all look fresh, too.” Mr. Gentz called into the back again and directed them to take away the hares. “As always, you didn’t butcher them.”

“I don’t know how to, and it’s a pain in the butt.”

“Well, it gives the guild work, so we’re happy to do it, but you’re going to lose money if you don’t learn.”

“I’ll learn,” I told him, but I had no intention of doing anything of the sort. It might have been more accurate to say I didn’t think I *could* learn. I’d only stopped being grossed out by monster corpses. Butchering them was just too much for me.

“So, just ten wolves and ten horned hares for today?”

“There’s more. There’s something the guild master told me to bring.”

“The guild master told you to bring something?”

I pulled out an orc.

“Hey there, you’ve even got an orc? Wait a second. You’re not going to tell me you’ve got ten whole orcs, are you?”

The smaller orcs were about two meters tall; larger ones could grow up to three. It was impossible to carry one in alone, and it’d get in the way if I put them all on the counter.

The assembled adventurers started whispering again. “There’s no way that’s an orc.” “But that’s definitely an orc.” “Did she beat it alone?”

I ignored their fussing and answered Mr. Gentz’s question. “I do.”

“Seriously? What kind of bottomless bag is that? We’ll be in a fix if you pull ten orcs out here. Come over to the refrigerated warehouse in back.”

I followed Mr. Gentz’ behind the counter to the warehouse, hearing the adventurers’ voices as I went. “There’s no way she could have ten of them.” “How’d she beat them?” “It’s because she’s a bear.” “The Bloody Bear could do it.” “Don’t diss the Bloody Bear.” “What’s the Bloody Bear?” “You don’t know...”

What was that about a “bloody bear”? I thought. I wanted to pause and listen in, but I couldn’t risk losing sight of Mr. Gentz.

The inside of the warehouse was lined with ice mana gems that kept it chilly. “Make sure to close the door once you get in, or you’ll let in too much warmth,” Mr. Gentz directed.

I shut the door behind me. There were countless cuts of meat, and hair, horns, hide and other parts of butchered monsters piled up inside. The wolves and horned hares I’d just taken out had been brought in, too. The employees were clearly earning their paychecks.

“I know it’s cold but bear with me. The meat rots if we let it get warm.” Mr. Gentz headed towards the largest table in the back. Even then, there was only enough space to lay down one orc. “Can you put one on top of this, then lay the rest down on the floor nearby?”

I pulled them out of the bear storage like he asked.

“Thanks. It must be hard to carry them around. Are you sure about this? You get a smaller cut if we butcher them for you.”

“I can’t butcher them, and I don’t need the money, so it’s fine.”

“I guess you’re still selling a lot. What’s your rank now, bear girl?”

“I just got to D-rank.”

“D-rank, huh. That would be the case if you can defeat orcs. Could I ask you for something?”

“What’s that?”

“You can’t skin or butcher them, right?”

“...”

“So, could you give the work to a young worker who comes in to butcher things for us?”

“Wouldn’t the guild lose money?”

“We’ll do fine without your business. How many adventurers do you think there are?”

That was true. The guild was managing just fine before I came by. One customer was a drop in the bucket. “But, why just that person?”

“Well, she’s still a minor and not an employee at the guild. You know her.”

“You’re not talking about Fina, right?” There was only one underage girl I knew.

“You know what’s going on with her family, too, don’t you?”

I nodded. She didn’t have a father, her mother was sick, and she had a little sister three years younger than her.

“I’ve been giving her work, too, but I’m supposed to keep work in the guild.”

“In other words, you want me to hire Fina directly to butcher my kills?”

“That’s right. She’s pretty good at it, even for her age. She’s also good at skinning, so I don’t think she’d damage the merchandise, either.”

“I don’t mind, but I don’t know how long I’m staying in town.”

“That’s fine. Just do it as long as you’re around.”

“Actually, how much should I pay her? I don’t know the market rate for harvesters.”

“The guild takes twenty percent. You can just give her ten percent of how much you sell the harvested materials for.”

“Is ten percent enough?”

“That’s actually on the high side. You can even give her less if you think it’s too much.”

“Got it.”

“Well, I’ll call in Fina, so just wait here.”

Mr. Gentz happily headed into a back room. I thought he’d be gone for a bit, but he immediately returned with Fina.

“Yuna!” She ran over and hugged me. Yeah, she was cute. I gave her a pat on the head.

“Fina, how’ve you been?”

“Good. Is it true that you’re giving me work?”

“Yeah, could you butcher the monsters I’ve brought in?”

“Thank you so much.” Fina’s face broke out into a wide smile.

“So, Fina,” said Mr. Gentz, “you don’t have to come over here for a while.”

“But...”

“The reason why we’ve had more work lately is because your big sis was bringing in stuff without harvesting it. If she gives you the work, we won’t have as much to do in the guild. I’m going to have you put in a good day’s work today though, so don’t worry. She brought in some wolves, horned hares, and orcs—ten of each.”

“That’s so many!”

“So, what should I do starting tomorrow?”

“Can I come over to your inn tomorrow, Yuna?”

“Sure.”

“In that case, I’ll come around seven.”

It was kind of early for an appointment, but the people in this world started working as soon as the sun came up and finished once the sun went down. Nobody worked under the light of a mana gem.

I left the freezing warehouse for the muggy heat outdoors. I collected my cut from Mr. Gentz and went back to the inn.

Chapter 19: The Bear is Dubbed the Bloody Bear

I HAD A DELICIOUS BREAKFAST that day at the inn, too. Not having to cook was the absolute best. As I basked in my hermit's dream come true, Fina came skipping in, full of energy.

"Yuna, good morning!"

"Morning." I slurped my hot soup, savoring the taste. "Just wait a bit. I'll be done eating in a sec."

"Okay, that's fine."

"Elena, could you bring Fina something to drink?"

"Yuna?"

"It's fine, just sit. I have something to tell you today."

When I said that, Fina sat down obediently in the chair in front of me. Elena came back with the drink immediately.

"Fina, there are a ton of things I don't know about, so could I ask you about them?"

"Yes."

"Is there anything you need for butchering? All I know is that you need a knife."

"That's the main thing. The sharper it is, the better the skinning goes. If your knife is dull, it's tricky to get a wolf's pelt off without damaging it. If it's high-level monster, sometimes you can't butcher them with a normal steel knife."

"What about your knife?"

"It's a steel knife, but Mr. Gold made it, so it's a good one."

"Do you need anything else?"

"I guess just a place to do the butchering. It'll help if there's water nearby, too."

"That's it?"

“I’ll need a whetstone and a place to store the materials. After a while, the meat starts to spoil.”

“So, for the time being, that means you need a whetstone, a place to harvest, and a place for safekeeping, right?” That was alright. I could use the thing I’d made earlier. “One more thing. What are you going to do while I’m out doing quests? Do you want to come with me? Or do you want to wait?”

“I want to go with you, but I’d be in the way.”

“Why would you want to come with me?”

“If I go with you, I might be able to pick some herbs for my mom.”

“In that case, do you want to come?”

“Really?”

“I can protect you. Are you fine with spending the night out?”

“Uhh, I think it’s fine if I tell my mom beforehand. But she’d be worried if I stayed out a long time.”

“In that case, we’ll just do a day trip today. Could you tell your mom it might end up being an overnight and two days next time? Or should we talk to her together?”

“It’s okay. I’ll make sure to tell her.”

I finished my breakfast and took a slow walk to the guild. We got replacement whetstones at a tool shop on the way. When I got to the guild, the other adventurers were keeping Helen busy, so I just headed toward the D-rank board on my own. Fina followed behind me.

The D-rank board didn’t get a lot of attention. The busiest one was the E-rank board. Some people watched me, but no one said anything. It was a busy morning, and no one had time to pay attention to me while they were scrambling for work.

Escort a merchant to the royal sector.

Orc slaying, includes the meat.

Slay a demon monkey that is plaguing our crops.

A sword or magic teacher above D-rank.

Acquire Melmel grass.

Investigate strange monster sightings around Hoelle mountain.

Bring iron ore to Hoelle mountain.

“There aren’t a ton of fun quests.”

“Yuna, is that how you choose?”

“Yeah. I’d rather do fun ones if I do any at all.”

I headed to the C-rank board next. There were only four adventurers there, all of whom seemed to be part of the same party. They were chatting with each other as they picked assignments. I peeked at the board between them, trying to keep out of their way.

Gather wyvern materials.

Slay orc horde.

Protect Fort Saumaug.

Annihilate the Zamon thief gang.

Ogre materials.

There were some fun ones, but I didn’t know where the monsters would be, so finding them would be hard. I would have liked to do the wyvern one if I knew where to look for one.

“Hey, girl in the weird clothes. This board is for C-rank,” a twenty-something-looking man from the four-person group told me.

“I know. I’m just seeing what kind of quests are in C-rank.”

“Just looking? Well, I guess it’s worth it to study your seniors.”

A woman in a sorceress’s outfit looked at me. “Isn’t that that rumored E-rank girl?”

“I became D-rank yesterday,” I said.

“What about your other party members? That little one definitely isn’t of age yet.” It was pretty obvious Fina wasn’t old enough to become a member of a party.

“Didn’t we hear the Bloody Bear goes solo?”

“What’s that about a bloody bear?” said another adventurer.

“What? You don’t know, Toya?” What looked like the party leader joined the conversation. “Supposedly an adventurer who picked a fight with a girl in a bear costume got beat bloody, and she didn’t even forgive him when he apologized. She kept whaling on him even after he was down...and she kept going at it until she’d beaten up all the

adventurers around into a pulp.”

Sounds scary, I thought. What bear were they talking about?

“That bear girl doesn’t even butcher her monsters. She just brings corpses in every day, all bloodied up, so everyone’s been talking about her.”

Well, of course a monster’s going to bleed if you kill it with a sword, I thought. Besides, I always put them away right away, so they’d only start bleeding when I took them out of the bear storage.

“They started calling her Bloody Bear because of her attitude and her antics.”

“I had no idea there was a bear like that,” said the leader. This was news to me, too.

“Well, you don’t come into the guild often, after all.”

“Is this bear-girl famous?”

“Totally—she’s killed goblin hordes, a goblin king, and orcs all on her own.”

“Right, and her outfit is weird, too. She’s pretty tough, so word’s been getting around about her lately.”

“I see. My apologies, bear girl. I thought you were just a beginner in a weird outfit.”

It seemed they weren’t bad people. They’d just been trying to warn an apparent amateur that she was at the wrong quest board. “That’s alright. Thank you for your concern,” I said.

“I see. Well, we’re heading out. If anything happens, let us know.”

Apparently having decided on a quest, they headed over to the front desk with the notice they’d plucked from the board. I picked out my own D-rank quest that looked like a day’s work.

“Yuna, did you find something you like?” said Fina.

“Yup. Let’s get going, too.”

Chapter 20: The Bear Summons a Bear; The Bear's House is a Bear House

“YUNA, WHAT KIND of quest did you get?”

“Tigerwolf slaying.”

“Yuna!”

“What?”

“Tigerwolves are supposed to be bigger and stronger than wolves. Are you going to be okay?” Fina latched onto my clothes, clearly concerned.

“Probably?” I bet they were just larger versions of wolves. I gave Fina’s worried little head a pat and headed out of town. There were merchants and adventurers getting a late start lined up at the gate. We lined up, I flashed my guild card at the gate, and we left.

We went off-road and walked for a few minutes to get somewhere where there weren’t as many people around.

There were a couple adventurers staring at us from a distance, but I ignored them and stopped walking.

“Yuna?”

“Give me a sec—I’m going to pull out something to ride on.”

I told Fina to step back a little and stretched out both my gloved arms. I poured mana into them. The bears’ mouths opened wide, and two large, warbling masses, one white and one black, leapt out of the left and right mouths. They started to wriggle, then slowly stood up on all fours.

Shockingly, any creatures I summoned were...also bears.

The bears edged up to me, and I patted their fluffy heads and chins. They squinted like they were enjoying it, and gently nuzzled my face.

“Yuna!” Fina took a step back.

“It’s okay. They’re my summons, so they won’t hurt you. Here, try

petting them.”

Fina approached gingerly and touched the bears. When she realized the bears weren’t going to hurt her, she smiled.

“Okay, Fina, how about you ride on Kumakyu?”

“Kumakyu?”

“The white one’s Kumakyu, and the black one is Kumayuru.”

Kumakyu squatted to make it easier for Fina to get on.

“Go ahead.”

Fina timidly mounted Kumakyu. Once she was on, Kumakyu stood up slowly. “Uh-aah,” Fina whimpered.

“You’ll be fine as long as you hold on tight. Actually, thanks to Kumakyu’s ability, the only way you’re getting off is if you jump off yourself. You won’t fall, even if you fall asleep or let go.”

Once I’d calmed Fina down, I mounted Kumayuru. “We’ll start out slow, then speed up once you get used to it.”

“O-okay.”



Straddling our bears, we rode towards the tigerwolves' den. I don't have to tell you that the adventurers, merchants, and travelers nearby were gawking at us. I'd been kind of shy about summoning steeds where others could see, but waiting until I was far away from town every single time got old fast, so I decided to just ignore the stares.

Our bears sped up slowly. We were heading into the mountains, even deeper than where I'd found the goblin king. It was a six-hour walk, but we would get there in about half an hour on bearback.

"Aha ha ha ha ha!" Fina seemed like she was starting to have fun. It's not like bears had speedometers, and I had no frame of reference, never having driven a car or ridden a motorcycle, but I did know we were going pretty fast. Despite our speed, we were sheltered from the wind because the bears' entire bodies were cloaked in the magic I'd invoked. That was how I knew we'd get safely to our destination, even if we fell asleep.

The bears suddenly accelerated as we approached the village where I'd stopped during the goblin slaying. I didn't want to scare the village out of their skins by dropping in unannounced on summoned bear steeds, so we detoured around it. Our pace dropped once we got into the mountains. We'd climb slowly from there.

"I'm pretty sure it's somewhere around here."

The quest slip had said they could be found in this area. I dismounted once we found some level ground partway up the mountain, checked to make sure I had enough clear space, then started taking items out of my bear storage and setting them up.

"Yuna!" Fina yelled, seeing what I was pulling out. She was doing a lot of yelling today.

I'd pulled out a bear house. It was two stories high, complete with a yard. The façade looked like a massive bear standing on all fours. The entrance was the bear's wide-open mouth and the second story looked like a bear cub riding on its back. It even came with an attached storehouse.

"How about we go in and take a break?"

"Sure..."

I had Kumayuru and Kumakyu wait in the yard while we headed

in through the bear-mouth doorway, almost like the bear was eating us. The inside was decorated Japanese-style.

“Oh, make sure you take your shoes off over there,” I told Fina, just in case the customs in this world didn’t match.

The entryway where you took your shoes off led into the living room. The first floor had the living room, kitchen, dedicated bath, restroom, and a mini storage space. My room was on the second floor, along with a few guest rooms. The cub’s head formed the roof. I was thinking I could use it to dry my laundry outside.

“Oh, have a seat somewhere over there.” I pointed at a sofa-like chair.

“Yuna...”

“What?”

“What is this house?”

“I made it for myself with magic.”

My experiments with the bear storage had proved it could handle anything, no matter how heavy or how many things I stored, so I’d made myself a house for travelling. I’d built it with earth magic while visualizing a bear, which, of course, made it a lot more powerful. I used a few low-power earth spells to make the walls and set up the room divisions, bought and installed mana gems for the rooms where I needed water, and even installed a fridge in the kitchen. Since I’d set up light mana gems in each room, I could light the place up at night. If I just had a TV and a computer, my hermit abode would be complete.

I went to the kitchen and brought Fina a cold fruit juice.

“Are you part of the nobility somewhere, Yuna?”

“I’m not.”

“Then are you a princess?”

“No real princess would look like me. I’m just your ordinary adventurer.”

Fina seemed like she wanted to say more, but she kept quiet.

“Once we’ve rested, I’m going to head out and look for a tigerwolf, okay?”

“What about me?”

“You can go out and look for herbs for your mom with Kumakyu. You should be safe as long as Kumakyu is around. I’ve set up a defensive boundary around the house, so if you get in trouble, you should be safe as long as you come back to the house.”

“...”

“Also, there are some monsters in the storehouse, so if you have time, could you butcher them?”

“You mean I can leave butchering them for later?”

“That’s for you to decide. I’ll pay you ten percent of what I get from selling the butchered monster parts, so it’s up to you whether you finish foraging early so you can butcher the monsters, or spend the entire time looking for herbs for your mom.”

“Okay, I understand.”

“How about we head to the storehouse so I can explain things to you?”

I’d set up the storehouse so we could get to it from within the house or from outside. It was about twenty-tatami-mats wide, and was outfitted with only running water and a workbench. I extracted about ten wolves and horned hares from my bear storage and left them by the wall.

“You don’t have to butcher all of these, but once you’re done, could you put everything away in this room?”

The next room over was refrigerated cold storage, much like a walk-in freezer. Though time would stop for the house and everything in it once I packed it back into the bear storage, anyway.

“Okay, I’m headed out. Don’t get into any trouble, okay? Kumakyu will keep you safe if anything happens, so you should be fine.”

Chapter 21:

The Bear Goes Tigerwolf Slaying

ONCE I LEFT THE BEAR HOUSE, I mounted Kumayuru and headed out. The bear shoes were great for getting around, but I really liked riding Kumayuru and Kumakyu. They'd get grumpy if I only rode on one of them though, so I had to alternate.

I used detection magic to scope out the place on bear back. My range had expanded as I leveled up, and I detected tons of monsters.

Aha. Is that them?

"It looks like there are two of them. Maybe they're mates?"

I pointed the way for Kumayuru. The bear ran, slipping between the trees and parting all the branches and bushes as it went. *Way* more efficient than running in my bear shoes. There were wolves nearby, but I ignored them for today and kept moving along.

After a while, I could sense the tigerwolves getting closer, so I had Kumayuru stop. I heard the sound of a river nearby. Should I approach slowly on foot, or just charge in mounted? It was cool if they attacked me, but if they fled, chasing them down would be a pain in the butt. If I were a hunter for reals, I'd approach them from downwind to avoid being detected by smell, but I didn't have those skills.

I guess I should just rush in? I thought. I pointed Kumayuru in the tigerwolves' direction. We started to run, slipping up the mountain like a shadow.

When we reached the river, two large felines—the tigerwolves—were resting there. They stood up sluggishly at the sight of us. One snarled. They were trying to see what we were doing.

"They're bigger than I thought."

One of them was about Kumayuru's size. The other one was even larger. *Maybe the smaller one was the female and the bigger one was the male?* I thought.

I dismounted Kumayuru slowly, then patted its head and asked it to take care of the smaller tigerwolf.

I loosed a wind spell on the two tigerwolves, which they dodged easily. Kumayuru bore down on the female tigerwolf, and I sent fire magic flying at the male. It jukeed to the right and shot towards me—it definitely had wolves beat for speed and control. It closed the distance between us instantaneously.

I made an earth wall, but it plowed through it.

Uhhh, I thought, looks like normal magic doesn't work on these.

It was close enough to pounce. I jumped into the sky to escape. It roared, watching me take off—then jumped up after me.

“Seriously?!”

The tigerwolf's sharp fangs came right at me as I fell.

“Bear punch.”

I hit the open-mouthed tigerwolf hard in the side of its face, slamming it to the ground. As soon as I landed, I shot off a flurry of ice arrows that bounced off its hide. I guessed it was the same deal as the goblin king—I couldn't damage it with normal magic at the level I was now. In that case, I'd beat it the same way I did the goblin king.

I opened up a deep hole in the ground and dropped the tigerwolf into it. But just as I came up to the hole to attack, the tigerwolf ran up the side of shaft and sprang back out, turning its momentum into a claws-first pounce. I backstepped clear of it.

It looked like that trap was a dud.

Meanwhile, Kumayuru was fighting the smaller tigerwolf. They fought and parried claw to claw, fang to fang, equally matched. If Kumayuru were a normal bear, it would have been slower, but my bears were fast—even faster than a tigerwolf. They had enough stamina to run all the way from the town to this place without a sweat. If that tigerwolf was an equal match for my bear, it was a lot stronger than I'd expected.

Leaving that tigerwolf to Kumayuru, I decided to just focus on beating the one in front of me. I really wanted that pelt; I needed a solution that would keep it pristine.

“Water bear.”

A bear made from water appeared and ran at the tigerwolf, grappling it with its watery arms. It forced the tigerwolf's head against

its body and into its watery chest, and a storm of bubbles flooded out of the monster's mouth as it thrashed its head around.

Bear-type magic really is strong, I thought.

When I looked over at Kumayuru, it was in the middle of getting the tigerwolf pinned. I made a ball of water and fired it at the tigerwolf. It wrapped around the tigerwolf's face and Kumayuru held her down. After a while, they stopped moving.

That's a wrap on the slaying, I thought.

I put the tigerwolves away into my bear storage and headed back to the bear house.

Chapter 22: Fina and the Bear Part Two

SO, TODAY I WOKE UP and made breakfast for my mom and sister like I always do. Mom seemed better today. I waited until they finished breakfast, and then I went to the guild. When I got there, I was so happy to find someone brought in lots of wolves to be butchered. It looked like I would have lots of work today.

The refrigerated warehouse at the back of the guild is cold. They need to make it that way so that the meat doesn't rot. They have warm gear made from wolf pelts at the warehouse, so I borrowed those. They're made for guild employees, so it was a little big, but what can you do? They're warm.

When I went into the back of the warehouse, the wolves were all piled up into a heap. I took one of them and put it on top of a table. The tables are a little tall, so I have to set up a stepstool for myself, but it's easier to butcher them this way.

I gutted the wolf and skinned it capably. What a pretty wolf. Wolf pelts fetch different prices depending on if they've been hacked up with a sword or finished with just one hit like this one. It looked like a really great adventurer had defeated this wolf.

I could understand why they brought the wolf in without butchering it, then. Low-rank adventurers will butcher everything themselves to avoid handling fees. High-rank adventurers don't need to try as hard to save money. I'm grateful for that.

After I took off the pelt, I butchered the meat into the cuts they sell to the inns and restaurants and normal families. They can't sell the scraps, so I take those home. We're going to have meat for dinner today.

Thank you, guild.

There's plenty of butchering work for me every time I go to the guild lately, which is great. A few days ago, there was even a goblin king. Of course, I haven't ever butchered a goblin king before, so I

watched the older employees work on it, so I could learn. Apparently, goblin kings are very tough. They could barely get through it with a regular knife.

It had really horrible cuts all over the front of its body, but the back of its body was clear. I guess the person who beat it fought it from the front.

There sure are some amazing adventurers out there.

I had wolves to butchered today, too. Apparently, they were brought in by the same person—a girl wearing a bear outfit. It was Yuna! Yuna had been helping me indirectly.

Today, there were horned hares. Their pelts are soft and fluffy and feel so nice. I've heard their horns can be turned into some kind of medicine, but that's not really part of what I do, so I don't know much more. My job is just butchering. I split the hares into their pelts, horns, and meat.

I wish I could make clothes out of these pelts for my sister. I wanted them so bad, but I'd never steal them. If I did that, I'd be betraying Mr. Gentz's trust after he gave me work.

I had work again today. I was happy as a clam.

While I was working on skinning wolves, I listened in to the guild workers and heard there a big heap of monsters coming in that needed butchering. Maybe it was Yuna? I would have liked to go check, but I couldn't leave my workstation.

But right after that, Mr. Gentz came in to fetch me. Apparently Yuna wanted me to work exclusively butchering things for her! He took me to Yuna, who said she would pay me to butcher all her kills while she was in town. I was over the moon to hear I would have a steady job!

Since I still had work that day, we promised to meet tomorrow and went our separate ways.

The next day, I woke early in the morning and went to the inn Yuna was staying in to meet her at the time we'd agreed on, but when I

got there, she was having breakfast. Maybe I was there too early? Yuna asked me to sit with her, though, and gave me juice. It was really good.

We talked about what we would do today, and she asked me if I wanted to go with her or stay here. If she was going to the woods, I wanted to accompany her. I might be able to find herbs that would help my mom, but I would stay behind if I'd just get in her way. But Yuna said she could protect me, so I chose to go with her.

When we got to the guild, we went over to the quest board. I waited for Yuna a little bit away from the board, where I wouldn't get in the way. Yuna looked like she might be arguing with some adventurers again—I think that bear outfit just draws attention—but nothing happened after all, and she left the adventurers behind. What a relief. It looked like she'd found a quest she liked, so I asked her what kind of quest it was.

She told me, "Tigerwolf slaying."

I was speechless for a whole second. I don't know much about how adventurers work, but can D-rank quests really be completed by a single person? It looked like everyone else was making parties to fight together.

Was it really okay for me to tag along on a quest like this?

Chapter 23:

Fina and the Bear

Part Three

WE LEFT TOWN through the gate. Actually, I'd never asked Yuna where we were going. Maybe there were tigerwolves in the woods nearby? Then Yuna said that we were going far away, so she would take out things to ride on.

I didn't know what she meant by "take them out." She told me to step back a little.

When she held up her gloves, black and white things came out of them. I was wondering what they were when then they started moving. They were big, scary bears! They stood up, and then snuggled up to Yuna. She hugged them and petted their heads.

I was watching her, and then she told me, "It's okay. They're my summons, so they won't hurt you. Here, try petting them."

I was scared, but I got closer to them really slowly and touched them. They were soft. They were a lot cuter than I was expecting. The white one was called Kumakyu and the black one was Kumayuru. I ended up riding on Kumakyu. I was up so high, I was a little scared of how everything looked, but Kumakyu was really stable and I didn't feel like I was going to fall.

We started at a normal speed, and then went faster once I got used to it. It was fun. The scenery was rushing by faster and faster. I'd never gone this far from the town before.

We started climbing up a mountain.

Yuna stopped. She told us we would take a break on a flat part of the mountain. I really was tired, even though I was just riding Kumakyu. I said thank you to Kumakyu and got down.

When Yuna got off of Kumayuru, she looked around. Then, when she held up her glove, a house suddenly appeared in front of us.

That couldn't be right. I really had no idea what's going on. Are

houses that easy to build? I'm just a kid, but even I know that can't be true. Carpenters are the ones who make houses. Also, why was the house shaped like a bear?

"Anyway, how about we go in and take a break?"

When Yuna said that, all I could do was nod okay. I've never seen a room like the one in the house. She told me to take my shoes off at the door. The floors were pretty. They were floors you definitely wouldn't want to get dirty. I took off my shoes and went inside.

Yuna told me to, so I sat down in a chair. I was looking around nervously when Yuna brought me some juice. It was cold, which really surprised me, but it was really good juice.

I asked Yuna something I really wanted to know. "Are you part of the nobility somewhere, Yuna?"

"I'm not."

"Then are you a princess?"

"No real princess would look like me. I'm just your ordinary adventurer."

She said she wasn't a noble or a princess, but I don't think she's an ordinary adventurer, either. I don't think an ordinary adventurer who can make a house like this, or summon things like Kumakyu, or beat monsters on their own. Especially not one who does all that and also dresses like a bear.

As I drank my juice, she told me about what we would do today. Apparently, she was going to go out to find the tigerwolves on her own. She told me I was allowed to go around the mountain and look for herbs. She told me that I could do the butchering whenever I wanted.

I decided I would go look for herbs for at least a little while. I was scared about trying to do it alone, but apparently Kumakyu was going to go with me. I guess it would keep me safe?

I decided that if I couldn't find any herbs after looking a little, I would come back and do the butchering.

Yuna left with Kumayuru. I got onto Kumakyu too and went out to look for herbs. I rode on Kumakyu and we explore the mountain. I did really want to do some butchering, so I hoped we would find herbs some.

“Kumakyu, can you find herbs?” I asked, because why not? Kumakyu craned its neck toward me and nodded. Did it understand me?

The bear went deeper and deeper into the mountains. Was it looking for herbs for me? I kept an eye out too from on top of Kumakyu. I’ve done this a lot, so I can spot them even from far away.

Then Kumakyu started to go really fast.

Over there! I thought. I could see the herbs that Kumakyu was running towards. This bear was amazing.

I jumped off Kumakyu and gathered the herbs. I didn’t want to pick them all, so I just took half, which was still a lot. Maybe no one harvests these because they’re so deep in the mountains?

When I was picking the herbs, I heard the grass rustling. I looked where the sound was coming from and saw a wolf. I jumped back, scared, and the wolf ran off right away.

Oh, right, I thought. Kumakyu was with me. The wolf probably took one look at Kumakyu and decided not to mess with it.

“Kumakyu, thank you.” I petted the bear’s head. It was so cute.

I put the herbs in my bag and decided to head back, which was when I realized something. I didn’t know the way back. I was lost!

But I thought that, Kumakyu started walking confidently. Maybe it knew the way back?

“Do you know where the house is?” I asked, and it nodded in reply. The bear was smarter than me.

Thank you, Kumakyu!

Chapter 24: The Bears Are on the Job Until They Get Home

I WENT BACK to the bear house on Kumayuru. Kumakyu was curled up comfortably in the garden, taking a nap, which meant Fina was home. After I told Kumayuru to rest, I headed to the storage room. Fina was hard at work butchering monsters.

“Oh, welcome back, Yuna,” she said as she saw me come in.

“Glad to be home.”

“You came back so early. What happened to the tigerwolves?”

“I beat them. Sorry, but could you harvest the mana gems from them later, so I can prove I killed them?”

“Sure, that’s fine.”

I pulled two tigerwolves out of the bear storage. Fina looked shocked by the sight of their giant bodies. “You’re so amazing, Yuna.”

“They were definitely strong. Regular magic didn’t work on them, and they moved fast, so I ended up having to use my trump card.”

“I still think it’s amazing that you could beat them.”

“Thanks. So, did you end up going searching for herbs?”

“Yes, Kumakyu helped me.”

“It did?”

“Yeah! I asked ‘Kumakyu, can you find herbs?’ and it took me to a place where there were plenty.”

I had no idea Kumakyu could do that. I’d have to try it out later.

Fina kept skinning, even while we talked. I watched as she expertly separated the pelt from the meat and bones. “Do you just want the mana gems from the tigerwolves?” she asked.

“Yeah, just the mana gems are fine for now. I might ask you to do the rest later, though.”

When she got to a good stopping point on the wolves, Fina

switched over to the tigerwolves. She slit their stomachs, stuck her hands right in, and pulled out the mana gems. She gave them a rinse and handed them to me. They were more than twice the size of regular wolf gems and shone bright white.

“You know where the gems are?” I was impressed that she hadn’t hesitated before going right for them.

“Usually they’re right in the middle,” she said.

“Really?”

“Yeah, but I haven’t butchered every kind of monster there is, so I’m not completely positive. I knew tigerwolves have their gems in the same place as wolves, though.”

“You’re amazing, Fina.”

“No, you’re amazing, Yuna. I can’t believe you can beat monsters that strong all by yourself.”

“Thanks. It’s kind of late now, but do you want to have lunch?” I packed the two gem-less tigerwolf corpses away into my bear storage.

“I...haven’t made any lunch...” Fina murmured softly, looking at her feet.

“That’s okay, I had them make us some at the inn, so come to the dining room after you wash your hands.”

“Okay.”

Once I got back to the main bear house, I pulled juice from the fridge and the steaming meals from my bear storage, grateful for the time suspension. Fina came in as I finished setting the table. “How about we eat while it’s still hot?”

I pointed her toward a seat and plated up our meals next to each other.

“It looks so good.” Fina seemed delighted to see our meals side-by-side.

“What do you want to do now?” I asked.

“Do for what?” Fina seemed puzzled.

“Should we head home? Do you want to keep butchering things?”

“I want to keep working, if that’s okay.”

“Then we’ll stay here for a while.”

“Thank you very much.”

I told Fina that I was going to take a nap on the second floor once we were done eating, and headed to my room. It was about eight-tatami-mats wide, and pretty spacious. I’d set up a largish bed, a round table, and four chairs, plus a dresser and bookshelf—both empty. It didn’t matter if the room itself was spartan, as long as I had the bear storage.

I turned the black bear onesie inside out to switch to the white one, then crawled into bed. I ended up taking a multi-hour nap.

Someone was shaking me. “Yuna, Yuna.”

“Fina?”

“Please wake up.”

“Good morning. Are you done with the harvesting?”

“Yes, I’m done. I came over to wake you up.”

“Thanks.” I yawned and got out of bed.

“Yuna!” When Fina saw my outfit, her eyes sparkled. *Huh?* I thought. “That white bear is so cute.”

Oh right, I was wearing the white bear now.

“It’s for when I sleep.” I took the white bear clothes off and flipped them inside out, reverting into my normal black-bear self.

“All right,” I said, “let’s head home.”

Fina and I switched steeds this time. We made it back to town about thirty minutes later, just as the sun was starting to set. I didn’t know much about this world’s culture yet, but I was pretty sure you shouldn’t keep ten-year-olds out too late.

When I galloped up to the gate with Kumayuru, we startled the guard so bad he readied his pike. Fina and I dismounted, and I put the bears away. I tried to look natural when I showed the guard my guild card.

“Aye, what was with those bears just now?”

“They’re just my summons.”

“Oh, summons.”

He passed my card back to me without comment. I thought he'd say *something* about them, but nada. We headed for the guild to report that I'd slayed the tigerwolves.

Chapter 25:

The Bear Looks for a Butchering Site

WHEN WE MADE IT to the guild, Fina told me she'd wait outside, so I went in alone. Couldn't blame her for not wanting to go into a place with all these filthy men around, that was for sure. Let alone the idiots who'd pick a fight if a kid walked in.

Helen was waiting at the front desk. The queue was empty, so I headed on over.

"Are you reporting your quests, Ms. Yuna?"

"Yeah, I just finished it."

"May I see your guild card?" I handed it over, and Helen checked my quest information. "Did you really accept a tigerwolf slaying quest?!"

"Well, yeah."

"And you finished it on the same day, too!"

The adventurers in the room started buzzing right on cue. "You mean she took out D-rank monsters on her own?" "But tigerwolf territory is pretty far from here. You can't get there and back in a day." "Wait, you don't know?" "Know what?" "About the bears." "Bears? You mean the way that girl's dressed?"

A couple more members of the peanut gallery chimed in at this point. "Nah, she summoned some bears and went out on those." "I saw it, I did—and there were two of 'em. A black one and a white one." "Two of them!" "And you know what, those things were quick on their feet!"

The conversation behind me was getting animated. My conversation with Helen was proceeding apace.

"Well, Ms. Yuna, if you could provide proof of the slaying."

I pulled two mana gems out of my bear storage.

"You've got two here?"

"Because there were two of them."

A commotion broke out behind me, but I ignored them. Helen took the mana gems and put them on the crystal panel.

“Yes, both of these were killed today, without a doubt. Since the quest was only for one, we’ll add extra to the reward money for the second one. Are you fine with that?”

“Sure, but what would happen if I refused?”

“You would only receive payment for one of them and only one kill would be recorded on your guild card, but you would be able to keep the mana gem.”

“Okay. I don’t need mana gems right now, so you can take both of them.”

“Understood. I’ll record two kills for you. If you’ll excuse my asking, do you have the rest of the tigerwolves?” Helen’s eyes went to my bear storage.

“I do, but I’m not going to sell them.”

“I see. It would help the guild if you would sell them to us.”

“No can do. I want the pelts.”

I was planning on having Fina skin the striped pelts off the tigerwolves, so I could decorate my barren bear house with them. They’d work hung up on the wall or even laid out on the floor.

“Yes, I see. It’ll be a shame to miss out on the pelts, but would you sell us the claws and fangs, or perhaps the meat?”

“Sure. I can bring those in after we butcher them.”

“Thank you very much. This will be your quest reward, then. And here is your guild card back.”

I put my guild card and the hefty amount of money into my bear storage, and rejoined Fina outside.

“Sorry to keep you waiting. So, how about we head home?”

“You’re not going to sell the wolves and horned hares?”

“Eh, I’ll sell them next time. I’ll make sure to pay you, so don’t worry.” The truth was that I’d just left the butchered stuff in the bear house and couldn’t access them directly through the bear storage. I still needed to pay Fina, though, since she *did* harvest stuff for me. I handed her a silver coin.

“But Yuna...” Fina seemed surprised.

“It’s fine.” I’d paid her a little on the high end of what Mr. Gentz said was the market rate. “You can’t count on me staying in this town forever, so make sure you save up.”

“Thanks, Yuna.”

I gave Fina a pat on the head as she grinned at me.

Fina came over to the inn early in the morning the next day too. We’d just done all that stuff yesterday, so I wanted to tell her she could take a break—actually, *I* wanted to take the day off, but it was my own fault for not telling her that yesterday. It was just such a pain in the butt to leave town every single time we needed to butcher something.

Maybe there was a storehouse we could borrow somewhere around here? *It’d be nice if we could just rent out the guild warehouse or something*, I thought. I decided I’d head down to the guild with Fina and see.

We’d missed the morning quest-collecting rush, and there weren’t a lot of adventurers around. Helen looked bored at her desk. “Why, Ms. Yuna, good morning.”

“Morning.”

“Another quest today?”

“Actually, I have something I want to ask.”

“What would that be?”

“Is there a place around here that we could rent to use for butchering?”

“Is this about the tigerwolves?”

“That’s part of it, but I’ve got other kinds of monsters, too. It’d be nice if I could borrow the guild warehouse or something.”

“That’s not really possible.”

“I knew it.”

“And there’s the issue of how long you’d need the space. It would be long term, wouldn’t it?”

“Well, I’m not sure about that.”

“In that case, giving you a referral might be difficult.”

“Oh, right. Are there any empty plots of land around here?”

“Plots of land?”

“Yeah, like wide open places without anything on them.”

“I believe there are, but they’re not under guild jurisdiction. I think you’d be best off consulting the trade guild.”

“Trade guild?”

“Yes. They handle transactions in goods and commodities, but they also handle land transactions, so they could point you in the direction of something.”

“Got it. I’ll hit them up.”

We left the adventurers’ guild, and I had Fina guide me to the trade guild.

Chapter 26: The Bear House Is All Set Up!

THE TRADE GUILD was a little to the west of the town's center. The clientele was visibly different from that of the adventurers' guild. There weren't any meatheads or staff-carrying sorcerers, but there were a ton of eccentric-looking merchants. They had an unwelcoming air to them, wholly unlike in the adventurers' guild.

On top of that, my bear outfit still seemed to draw curious stares.

"Yuna, aren't you going in?" Fina asked as I hovered by the entrance, staring inside. That changed my mind.

It was bustling on the inside. I pulled my hood down low and cut off the stares, heading straight to the front desk. Fina glanced around the place and latched onto my sleeve, sticking close to me.

"Welcome," a woman in her early twenties greeted us. Her expression didn't change even when she saw what I looked like, and she received us with a smile. I guessed the guild employees were cut from better cloth than their clientele.

"Umm, I want to rent some land for a short time, and the adventurers' guild sent me here when I asked them about it."

"Yes, we can do that. We have plots of land for rent, and some buildings, too. What kind of land would you be looking for?"

"For now, just something completely bare with nothing on it."

"Yes, we have those."

"I'd like to rent it for about a month. How much would that be?"

"That would vary depending on the size of the land and its location. Did you have any preferences?"

"I'd prefer something close to the adventurers' guild, I think. It's fine if it's not super close. I'd also like it to be about the size of the adventurers' guild's warehouse, if possible."

"A plot of land the size of the adventurers' guild's warehouse. I will look into it, so if you could, please wait here."

She left the desk for a bit and came back after about five minutes

with several sheets of paper.

“I apologize for the wait. I have found about five options.”

“Which one is the cheapest?”

“That would be this one. Out of the five, it is the furthest from the adventurers’ guild. One month’s rent will come to thirty silver pieces.”

“Isn’t that kind of cheap?”

“The land has no buildings on it. However, please keep in mind that we may ask you to return the land to its original condition upon returning it to us if you used it for something.”

“Could you also tell me how much the others cost?”

“Of course. The others are each ninety, seventy-five, forty-eight, and thirty-five silver coins per month.”

“Could you show me where all five of them are?”

She pulled out a map and showed me each of their locations.

“Hmm, I’m going to pass on the ones going for ninety and seventy-five—bit pricey—and I’ll also pass on the thirty coin one because of where it is.”

That left the thirty-five and forty-eight-coin spots. The best spot was the forty-eight-coin one. It was close to both the guild and Fina’s house, and not far from the inn. The thirty-five-coin place was closer to the guild, but it was further from the inn and Fina’s house.

“How would you like to proceed?”

“If you could give me a deal on this one, I’d prefer it.” I pointed at the forty-eight-silver option.

“Incidentally, how will you use the land?”

“I was thinking of building a house on it so I could use it as a place for doing monster harvesting. Oh, but I’d make sure the house is gone when I give it back, of course.”

“If you could give me a moment...” The woman scurried off, but she came back almost immediately. “Pardon me for asking, but are you the Bloody Bear?”

“...”

“Ahem, that was rude of me. Are you the adventurer Yuna?”

“I am...”

“I would like to offer our gratitude to you for provisioning the wolves, horned hares, and goblin king during your time here.”

“Um...what exactly is the trade guild thanking me for?”

“Do you not know? The materials the adventurers’ guild produces are passed along to us, and we sell them. In return, the trade guild hires escorts and guarantees that we won’t run low on monster materials. We have a mutually beneficial partnership.”

“I had no idea.”

“Yes, and our merchants have been quite pleased that there have been more wolves and horned hares in circulation recently.”

“But the stuff I’ve been selling has to be barely anything compared to everything in the trade guild, right?”

“Not at all. Because the kills you bring in are in pristine condition, they sell for high amounts. Regular adventurers tend to bring in a lot of messy or damaged corpses. But the monsters you bring in are always clean, and they’ve become quite popular, especially those rare goblin king materials.”

“Who’d have thought?”

“How would thirty-five silver pieces sound for the plot of land we were just talking about?”

“Are you sure?”

“Absolutely. If you harvest materials to sell to the adventurers’ guild, it benefits the trade guild as well.”

“Well then, it’s a deal.”

“In that case, allow me to escort you to the plot now.” She stood up from her chair.

“You’re going to take me all the way there?”

“Would that be a problem?”

“Of course not, but are you sure you can leave the front desk just for me?”

“I can have someone fill in for me. I’d also like to cement our partnership, starting now.”

“Our partnership?”

“Yes. You’re an able, brand-new, and extremely skilled adventurer. Many people are going to want to work with you, and I’m just one of those people. Apologies for taking this long to introduce myself—I’m Milaine. It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

The place that Milaine brought us to was just as close to the inn and the guild as the map had promised. The plot was more than wide enough, and didn’t have much pedestrian traffic going by, which was great.

“If you could sign this contract and provide your guild card transcription, then.”

“A transcription?”

“Just put your guild card on top of this. It’ll verify your identity.”

After I wrote my name and transcribed my guild card, I paid the thirty-five coins for the month.

“In addition, since you will be building a house in this plot, the trade guild also does provide carpentry studio services. How would you like to proceed?”

“I’m fine. I already have a house.”

Milaine looked puzzled. I hesitated over whether or not to tell her about the bear storage and bear house for a second, but then decided to keep it under wraps.

“I see. If you need anything, please do come to the trade guild.” Milaine bowed and went back. I made sure she was gone, then made sure no one was passing through right then. Right, check. Left, check. Behind me, check. In front, check.

I pulled the bear house out of bear storage, and just like that, there was a whole house sitting on a plot of land that had been empty just a second ago. I headed into the attached storehouse with Fina.

“Okay,” I asked her, “could you handle the tigerwolves now?”

I left Fina to her work and headed back to the inn to tell them I’d be canceling my stay. Starting today, I’d be living in the bear house.

Extra Story: The Bear Summons Bears

AFTER BUYING A GRIMOIRE from the bookstore, I'd started practicing magic and grinding EXP off of the local monsters. I was slowly adjusting to the magic in this world, the fundamentals of which were, thankfully, the same as they'd been in WFO.

When I took a look at my status screen during a break a few days later, I noticed I'd gained some interesting skills.

Bear summoning... I thought. *That's got to mean I can summon bears, right?* Apparently, I could summon a bear from each bear glove.

I decided to give it a shot. I poured some mana into my black bear glove and pictured summoning a bear. When the black bear puppet mouth opened wide, a round, furry black object jumped out from its mouth.

Is this supposed to be a bear? I thought.

The round object shuffled and turned its head towards me, and I realized I'd been looking at its furry butt. The bear looked around and stood up, then slowly walked towards me. It was kind of scary, and I took a step back.

The bear took a step closer. When I moved back again, the bear let out a sad coo. I couldn't keep backing away now that it'd made a sound like that, so I let it get closer and snuggle up to me. Unsurprisingly, it was warm. When I patted its head, the bear seemed happy. Its fur felt soft and plush against my skin.

"Did I summon you?"

In response, it let out another coo and sat down with its back towards me.

"Are you trying to say you want me to ride you?"

It crooned again. I'd never even ridden a horse, but thinking about my plans for the future, I could certainly use a steed for long distance travel. I gingerly mounted the bear, and it stood up slowly, so I wouldn't fall.

“Uh, whooooo.” I felt myself tipping, but I didn’t fall. The bear turned to look at me, but it didn’t try to move.

“What’s wrong?” As soon as I asked, I realized what was going on. “Oh right, you don’t know where to go. Uh, you can just walk wherever for now.”

The bear crooned and started walking.

“Whoa.”

It was way better than I thought it would be. I wasn’t sliding around as much as I’d feared—if anything, it was kind of like riding on an expensive sofa.

“Could you try running for a little?”

The bear broke into a sprint so fast the scenery rushed by. I didn’t lose my balance or even feel like I’d fall, despite how fast we were going. *Maybe that’s this summon’s ability?* I thought. I swayed left and right to test it out, but even when I tried standing up, it was like there was some sort of force keeping me stuck to the bear. I didn’t even fall when I relaxed and laid down. Did that mean I could sleep while I travelled?

I decided I’d try that out later. I still had to check out the bear’s top speed.

“Try running faster.”

When I asked it to do that, the bear picked up speed. I was pretty sure we were going faster than a motorcycle. We hit the foothills of a mountain and just kept going as the ground grew steeply inclined. The bear didn’t even seem tired.

“Stop.”

Once we were halfway up the mountainside, I patted the scruff on the bear’s neck. The bear gradually slowed to a halt, and I got off and stretched. I had no idea where we were, but when I tried opening my map to check, the bear suddenly leaped to the side.

“What?!”

An arrow embedded itself in the ground right where the bear had been up until just a moment ago. I followed its trajectory and instantly raised a wall of earth.

Were they after us? I thought.

I used detection magic to look for their location. Following the angle of the arrow, I noticed one completely still target. I opened up a small hole in the earth wall for visual confirmation, but since the ground sloped up and there were trees around, I couldn't see who fired the arrow.

They were about a hundred meters away. They also weren't aiming at me, but at my bear. I looked at the bear and then my clothes, wondering if I might've looked like its cub from far away.

"Can you hear me?!" I shouted in the direction the arrow came from. "I'm an adventurer, and this bear is mine. Could you please not fire arrows at us?!"

I waited for a response. If they didn't answer, my only options were to run or strike back.

"Are you actually an adventurer? Is that bear really harmless?" they replied.

"It won't hurt you as long as you don't attack it," I said. "If you seem like you're going to attack, then I'm going to attack back."

They were silent for a short while.

"Alright. Truce."

A man carrying a bow and arrows emerged from a gap in the trees. He was dressed like a hunter from a videogame.

"Is that bear really yours?" he asked.

"Yeah." In order to prove it, I pet the bear.

"This is the first time I've seen a bear obey a human like that. Sorry for shooting out of nowhere. That big bear just gave me a fright when it turned up."

"That's fine, but I was there too. You should have known something was up."

"Sorry. That outfit made you look like a bear cub from a distance. Where's a girl like you from? You're not living in the woods with this bear, are you?"

"We live in a town called Crimonia."

"Crimonia? That's pretty far away. Is that look popular in that town or something?" I wished. The only place this look was trending was in Japan. "So why are you in a place like this, miss? It's dangerous

around these parts.”

“I was just taking a walk with my bear. Is it really that dangerous around here?”

“You were taking a walk? While wearing that weird outfit?”

Really, he didn’t have to call it weird. It’s not like I was wearing the suit because I *wanted* to.

“This place isn’t safe,” he said. “It has a guardian spirit.”

“A guardian what now?”

“It’s a gigantic boar. I shot at your bear because I thought it was the spirit at first.”

“Wait, is it really that big?” My bear was pretty large. If the boar was about the same size...

“Yup, it’s just about as big as that bear. It eats all our crops and attacks people that stray into the forest, so if you’re going to leave,” he said, “you better do it quick.”

“Got it. I’ll be off, then.”

The man hesitated as I climbed back on my bear. “Actually,” he said, “do you have a moment?”

“Sure. What is it?”

He looked at the wall I’d made and asked, “Can you use magic?”

“I can.”

“How strong is that wall?”

“Strong enough to protect against goblin and orc attacks.”

“Orc attacks?! I’ve got something I’d like to ask you, miss. Could you make walls like that around the village’s fields? We’ll pay you what we can, though I’m afraid it won’t be much. I know I’m asking something unreasonable of you, but at this rate the guardian spirit is going to eat the village out of house and home. Please.”

The man lowered his head in supplication. This sounded like a colossal pain in the butt, but it’d leave a bad taste in my mouth to come back and find the village destroyed. I agreed, though reluctantly. “I can do that, but I don’t know if it’ll actually hold up against the guardian spirit.”

I knew how dangerous a charging feral hog was, even back home.

I couldn't imagine how strong a bear-sized one would be, but I definitely couldn't guarantee my walls would keep it out.

"I understand. I'm Brandaugh, by the way. I live in the village near here."

"I'm Yuna. I'm an adventurer."

Having introduced ourselves, we headed towards the village, which was apparently in the opposite direction from where I'd come. I rode on the bear while Brandaugh led the way. As we traveled, he told me he'd give me several days' worth of vegetables the village had grown in thanks.

As we kept going down the mountain path, the village came into view. A man at the village entrance leveled his spear at us.

"B-Brandaugh, what is that thing behind you?!" the man shouted.

"It's okay! Lower your weapon. This person in the bear outfit is Yuna—she's an adventurer. The bear is hers, so we're in no danger as long as we don't hurt it."

"Are you sure?" he said, giving the bear a doubtful look.

"I promise it won't attack us."

"Alright, but this isn't my call to make. I'm going to fetch the village chief, so wait here," the man told Brandaugh, and ran off into the village.

"Sorry about this. Everyone is on alert because of the guardian spirit."

I guessed that was a given. I was wearing a strange outfit and had ridden in on what any normal person in this world would see as a ferocious bear.

After a while, the man returned, now accompanied by an older person. "Brandaugh, do you even understand the situation we're in?"

"It's *because* I understand the situation that I brought her here."

"What are you talking about?"

"This young girl can use earth magic. I brought her here so she could make walls to protect us against the guardian spirit."

"You want to raise walls with magic? It's true that might help us, but we have no money to pay her with..."

“Some fresh vegetables will do just fine,” I said.

“Are you certain that’s all you want?”

“Yeah, just make sure they’re tasty ones.” Veggies were best when they were freshly picked. That was a universal truth.

“And is that your bear?”

“It is.” I hugged the bear around its fluffy neck to prove it.

“It really won’t attack people?”

“As long as they don’t attack it first.”

“Alright. Well, allow me to formally welcome you to the village. Bogue, please let everyone in the village know about her, and be sure to stress that they should not provoke the bear.”

The guard ran off a second time, and we followed. As we proceeded into the village, it became clear they were in dire straits. Some houses had great crumbling holes knocked in their walls, while others had caved in entirely.

“This is all the guardian spirit’s doing. We can rebuild the houses, but without our fields, we’ll run out of food and the villagers will have no choice but to starve.”

I was starting to feel guilty about accepting any vegetables from them. From the state of the village, it was clear their produce was the most valuable thing they had.

As far as defenses went, all they had was a ramshackle wooden fence, patched and reinforced in places. I figured those were probably the sections the guardian spirit had smashed through. I backtracked to the village entrance and started surrounding the village with earthen walls, using the existing fence as a foundation to build on.

“Let me know if you need other exits, too,” I told Brandaugh.

“Will do.”

I made a lap around the village on my bear, raising two-meter-high walls. It was probably quite the spectacle to them, since more and more of the villagers gathered while I worked. They cheered each time I erected a new section of wall, and the kids ran after the bear.

“Magic sure is amazing,” said Brandaugh.

“You don’t have anyone in the village who can use magic?”

“We do, but all they can do is start small fires. I’ve never seen or heard of magic this impressive before. How are you doing on mana? Please don’t push yourself too hard.”

He clearly didn’t know much about magic, since he seemed genuinely worried about me. “I’m doing fine.”

“That’s good, but let me know if you get tired.”

Of course, I wasn’t tired at all by the time I was done building the wall. I fashioned several gates in the places where Brandaugh directed me to.

“What will you do if the guardian spirit comes in through here?”

“The spirit comes from the mountains, so it won’t be entering from this direction. We’ll still reinforce the gates with more wood later, just to be safe.”

We headed to the village chief to let him know the wall was done. He thanked me, saying they had little to offer in terms of hospitality, but insisted on offering me a meal. The sun was starting to set. In this world without electricity, work ended when the daylight did.

They ushered me into the village chief’s house and sat me at a table. I felt a little bad making the bear wait outside, but it was hardly going to fit through the door. A woman emerged from the kitchen with a loaded tray of food, and Brandaugh started in surprise.

“Marie, what are you doing here?”

“I’m helping the chief,” she said. “Besides, you were the one who brought our guest here, weren’t you? If I can’t be a hospitable wife, then who will?”

“But what about your belly?” Brandaugh fretted. One look at her pregnant stomach told me why he was concerned.

“A little exercise is good for me.”

“I suppose...but please don’t overdo it.”

The food Marie had brought out was bread, vegetable soup, and salad. The bread was delicious—it must have been freshly baked. The soup was a little bland, but it was still a tasty, satisfying meal.

“Miss,” said Brandaugh, “I already discussed this with Marie, but would you stay at my house tonight? We kept you working so late, and we still need to gather some vegetables to give you.”

Honestly, I'd pretty much decided at this point that it wouldn't be right to take their produce when they were already running so low. There was nothing to stop me from getting back on my bear and heading straight home, but I could see the sun setting outside. It'd be dark within an hour.

While I was debating what to do, a commotion erupted outside.

"The guardian spirit is here!" someone screamed.

Everyone in the village chief's home stood from their chairs.

"Marie," said Brandaugh, "you and the village chief stay here. I'll go."

He grabbed the bow leaning against the wall and ran out of the house. I ran after him, tracking the sound of the agitated voices, and my bear followed close behind me. When I got to where the villagers were gathered, there was a dreadful sound coming from the wall.

BLAM!!!! BLAM!!!!

"These walls are amazing! They're holding up even with the guardian spirit ramming into them!" The men who had set ladders against the wall to peer over it were cheering.

"The village is saved!"

"Thank you, miss!"

The gathered villagers showered me with gratitude, but their words changed to shrieks when they heard the lookouts on the ladders say, "The guardian spirit is on the move. But that's where—"

They were looking in the direction of the entrance.

"Get to your homes!"

"Damn, it's fast!"

The villagers started to scatter. Brandaugh ran through the crowd towards the entrance, and I let out a sigh before chasing after him, wishing he'd think about his unborn child before plunging headfirst into danger. It wasn't just Brandaugh heading to the entrance, though. As we made it to the main gate, we were joined by several men with weapons.

"We know where it'll come in from! Attack together as soon as it comes in!"

"Yeah!"

The guardian spirit loomed at the entrance. Just as Brandaugh had said, it was as massive as my bear. The archers fired, but the creature's hide repelled their arrows. It kicked off the ground and broke into a run, men with spears jabbing fruitlessly at it as it passed.

The spirit was running straight at me. Just as I was readying a spell, my bear blocked its charge.

"Bear!"

It slammed hard into the guardian spirit and held it back. The guardian spirit dug its heels in and tried to push the bear back, but the bear braced itself and stood fast, too. It wouldn't let the guardian spirit take a single step forward.

"Throw it to the side!"

The bear roared in response to my order and surged forward. The guardian spirit's struggling front legs lifted off the ground and then suddenly, with a loud *thud*, it was laid out flat. At the same time, I invoked my magic.

I gathered water in my right black bear glove. I loosed the spell at the guardian spirit, enveloping its head. Its struggles increased as it started to drown.

"Bear! Don't let it escape!"

The bear braced itself and held the guardian spirit down. It thrashed around, trying to escape, but it couldn't breathe, and the bear was using its full weight to pin it down. The guardian spirit gradually lost its strength to struggle. In the end, it stopped moving.

A subdued silence blanketed through the village.

"Thanks, bear," I said, and the bear let out a soft coo, then backed off from the guardian spirit.

"Is it dead?" someone asked in a hushed voice.

"Is it actually..."

Brandaugh took a spear from one of the villagers and jabbed at the guardian spirit. It didn't react.

"It's dead."

With those words, the village was filled with joy.

"Thank you, miss!"

“Thank you!”

Words of gratitude rained down on me.

“Are you really sure about this?”

I’d decided to donate the guardian spirit’s corpse to the village.

“This thing ate your food and caused you all that grief, didn’t it? You can eat it, or sell it, or do whatever you want with it.”

“But we haven’t given you anything in return. You made those walls for us, and even defeated the guardian spirit by yourself. How can we take the spoils of your kill after all of that?” The villagers nodded at the village chief’s words.

“You have pregnant women here. They need to eat well to keep up their health, and based on what I can see, none of you have been doing that, right?” They all had a slightly gaunt look to them. “I’ll come back again sometime, so you can thank me then.”

“You have our undying gratitude.” The village chief lowered his head in thanks.

I ended up staying at Brandaugh’s house for the night. When I headed out the next morning, the villagers all gathered at the main gate to see me off. It was downright embarrassing.

“Please come back anytime,” said the chief. “You will always be welcome here, miss.”

“Thank you, miss,” said Marie. “Tell us if you ever need anything. I’ll never forget the debt we owe you.”

“Thanks, Yuna,” said Brandaugh.

“Marie,” I said, “I hope the baby comes out healthy.”

“Be sure to come visit it!”

I hopped up on the bear’s back and left for Crimonia, grateful for its speed. It sure made long-distance travel more convenient.

Actually, I thought, idly patting its back as we sprinted homeward, I only tried the one glove, didn’t I?

I took a break once I’d made it past the mountain near the village and collected mana in the white glove to give summoning another bear a try. A giant white furball leapt out of the glove and landed on the

ground. *Okay, I thought, so this one is a white bear.*

But the white bear had its back pointedly turned toward me and wouldn't move. "Is something wrong?" I called out to it, but it didn't react.

I circled around to the front of the white bear. The white bear let out a small whine and turned its face down. *Maybe it's sulking?* I thought. It was doing everything short of tracing sulky circles on the ground. Cute as it was, I felt kind of bad. It had to be upset because I'd summoned the black bear, but not it.

It was cute, though.

"Sorry. It's not like I didn't want to summon you. I just forgot..."

The moment I said, "*I just forgot,*" the white bear turned its back on me again.

"Well, it's not like I actually forgot...well, look, I'm just one person. It's just impossible for me to ride you both at the same time, so how about I take turns? Will you let me ride you back home?"

I patted its furry white back as I asked it that. This time, the bear perked up its ears and looked at me.

"Would that be okay?"

The white bear crooned and stood up. All was forgiven, apparently.

I mounted the white bear and rode the rest of the way back home to Crimonia, using the time to think of names for my new steeds. Finally, it came to me. I'd name the black bear Kumayuru, and the white bear Kumakyu.

Afterword

TO EVERYONE who's picked up this book, it's a pleasure to meet you. To everyone who started reading it on *Let's Be Novelists*, long time no see.

I wonder if everyone who writes on *Let's Be Novelists* yells with happiness when they're approached with an offer to novelize their book? I actually developed a stomachache when that happened. I was beside myself! Why would anyone want to publish such a terribly written work?

This book is about a girl who has gotten her hands on the strongest gear possible in a game world—a bear onesie. When she wears the onesie, she's the strongest person there ever was, but when she takes it off, she's a normal girl. I was inspired by the concept of the “strongest weapon and strongest shield.” The strongest weapon is the black bear glove, and the strongest shield is the white bear glove. But the gloves alone didn't have quite the impact I wanted, so I also made the protagonist wear a bear costume.

You may be wondering, why bears? Well, when I pictured a fierce, strong animal, a bear was what came to mind. Besides, they make cute hand puppets, and would look really cute on a girl.

So that's the reason I started writing this book.

The townspeople and adventurers who gawk at Yuna at the beginning gradually come to accept the bear-costume wearing girl. They come to love her, whether as a charming bear or a terrifying bear. Many of the people who interact with Yuna end up happier for it (though the villains aren't quite so lucky).

If this book brought you even the slightest enjoyment, that would make me so happy.

Finally, I'd like to extend my gratitude to everyone who helped create this book. Thank you to my editor, who helped me out so much, to 029, who drew such magnificent illustrations, and to everyone at the publisher.

Kumanano – On a day in May, 2015



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